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CONTEXT MATTERS:
THE ROLE OF SETTINGS IN SPORT DEVELOPMENT

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CONTEXT MATTERS:
THE ROLE OF SETTINGS IN SPORT DEVELOPMENT

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Dedication

To My Family…

Lauren, my light at the end of the tunnel, who supported me in every way possible.

Mom and Dad, my cheerleaders, who never doubted me for a minute.

Adam, *mon frere*, who inspired me to have a voice and to share it.

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CONTEXT MATTERS:
THE ROLE OF SETTINGS IN SPORT DEVELOPMENT

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Sport participation in the United States is often characterized as a unitary experience that naturally instills a standardized set of values. In this work, however, I challenge the mythology of a unitary conceptualization of sport participation and examine how the experiences and outcomes of playing sports change depending on the setting in which the participation occurs. Specifically, I undertake an investigation into the differences between playing sports in an organized setting and playing them in an informal, unstructured setting. Drawing from the findings of three distinct studies, I first demonstrate through a mixed-method historical study how the field of sport management has narrowed its focus over time to exclude the more playful forms of sport and physical activity. In the second and third studies, I show the experiential and developmental outcomes that are potentially overlooked by maintaining a narrow definition of sport that excludes sport played in unstructured settings. In the second study, a phenomenological examination of pre-teen youth sport participants reveals that the meaning of the experience of playing youth sports derives not from playing in one setting alone, but emerges through the synthesis of experiences accrued in both organized and unstructured settings. In the third study, the relative influences of time spent participating in organized sports and informal sports during childhood are assessed with respect to the development

of participant creativity. Like the phenomenological study, the results of this quantitative analysis again point to the importance of balancing participation in both organized and unstructured settings. The most creative individuals are those who split their sport participation time across both settings, as opposed to individuals with below-average creativity, who spent the majority of their sport participation time in organized settings. Combined, the results of these three studies demonstrate the historical shift (in both research and practice) away from unstructured sport settings, and highlight the potentially transformative sport development implications of reincorporating unstructured sport settings on the overall experiences and outcomes of sport participation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Context matters. As Green (2008) notes, however, within the field of sport management "sport has been treated as if it were a unitary experience. That is, all sport is seen as the same; it is assumed to provide the same benefits to all participants no matter the program or context" (p. 138). This implicit assumption within the sport management literature has fostered an intellectual climate where sport that occurs outside of an organized environment -- particularly an elite, commercial sport environment -- has been virtually ignored. Over time, the management of non-elite or non-commercial sport has become framed as recreation or leisure, thus falling outside the purview of sport management. Yet, the very settings discarded by sport management have the potential to enhance sport development systems at both the mass participation and elite levels.

In spite of its purported universality, sport is far from the "unitary experience" Green (2008) discredits. While the mythology of sport participation (particularly for youth) suggests that the sport experience imparts children with laudable qualities such as character and perseverance, studies have shown that for child sport participants, putting them in an organized sport context may actually diminish aspects of character (e.g., Kleiber and Roberts, 1981). In other examples, the sport experience has been shown to be perceived differently by children depending on their social class (e.g., Watson, 1977) or culture (Guest, 2007). Green (2008) notes that, ultimately, the sport experience depends on the design and implementation of the program, and the participant's individual interpretation of that experience as a function of the program. However, while program elements undoubtedly play a critical role in the participant's experience, the context in which the sport participation occurs also represents a salient influence.

Chalip, Csikszenmihalyi, Kleiber, and Larson (1984) found that the immediate experiences incurred within different sport contexts (viz., organized sport, informal sport, and physical education) differed significantly from one another. The findings demonstrated that informal sport contexts provided participants with experiences which allowed them to feel that their abilities and the challenges of the environment were in a more harmonious balance. Despite the implicit significance to policymakers and programmers between the apparent experiential differences in the contexts that Chalip et al. (1984) examined, this study has not been replicated or followed up in any substantive manner. A quarter of a century later, sport development's understanding of how to meaningfully incorporate or utilize context-specific variations in the sport experience has remained largely overlooked, and thus the sport development systems in the United States have not directly capitalized on the potential complementary benefits of sport occurring in unstructured settings.

At least part of the blame for the arrested state of development of research examining sport settings is attributable to the inexorable movement towards a homogenization of the sport experience in the United States -- both in practice and academia. As Guttman (1988) contends, the twentieth century saw a rapid increase in the levels of adult control and imposition on children's play. Between the Progressive-era playground movement and the mid-century advent of organized youth sport leagues, the informal sport experiences that had characterized the history of play were quickly becoming viewed as inconsequential. In the latter half of the century, children's physical activity became the jurisdiction of parents and the government, and the ludic character of informal sport experiences was sacrificed at the altar of military fitness and elite athletic pursuits (Bowers & Hunt, 2011). Within a few decades, the youth sport experience had transformed from a healthy means of neighborhood socializing to professionalized

training in pursuit of college scholarships and employment opportunities. Now, children are asked to specialize in their sport training at earlier and earlier ages, all while the playful elements of children's informal (and to a certain degree formal) sport experiences are being stamped out to afford more time for the work-like pursuit of excellence (cf. Ogden, 2002). Consequently, this professionalization of youth sport has spawned a number of issues for children that had previously only applied to adults, such as burnout and drop-out (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005, 2008).

Given that the current intellectual climate has rendered sport to predominantly signify "organized sport," it is not surprising that many of the potential qualities that are inherent to the informal sport experience have been obfuscated, if not lost. During the last decade, as a professionalized model of youth sport development emerged as the dominant outlet for sport participation and physical activity (unless one factors in the number of exercise-based government programs), a precipitous decline in the health of U.S. children has also occurred. Childhood obesity rates have tripled, while, inversely, the rates of sport participation have steadily decreased (Bowers, Chalip, & Green, 2010a). Opponents of organized sport and competition-oriented child programs, such as Alfie Kohn (1992), would likely point to an obvious pattern in these data. As Kohn argues, focusing children's efforts toward the achievement of extrinsic rewards (such as college scholarships) in an adult-like orientation ultimately undermines the long-term intrinsic motivation to continue playing sports after these rewards are no longer available. Couple this explanation with the increasing exclusivity of competitive youth sport programs that focus on "hard work" and "dedication" instead of "fun," and it becomes apparent why less children are playing sport and more people are dropping out of sport completely following elite adolescent participation. In fact, the lack of participation opportunities for non-elite athletes has emerged as a problematic pattern for adults as well, and reflects the

broader systemic failures of the U.S. sport development system on the whole (Bowers, Chalip, & Green, 2010b; Sparvero, Chalip, & Green, 2008). As Kretchmar (2008) argues, if these trends are to be reversed, the joy of physical activity must replace utility as the focus of sport programming efforts.

Homogenizing the sport experience into an increasingly organized setting not only has a negative impact on the overall participation rates across the development system, but it also has negative consequences for those fewer and fewer children (and adults) who do play sports. As Devereux (1976) lamented three decades ago, the movement away from informal sport experiences like "backyard baseball" to playing exclusively Little League creates an overall "impoverishment" in the ludic quality of sport for children. Devereux wondered about the developmental ramifications of such a shift on children's ability to socialize with one another and develop ethical reasoning and problem-solving abilities. This concern is supported by the work of play theorists who posit informal sports as an integral component of a child's developmental trajectory. For instance, Piaget (1962) theorized that informal "games with rules" represent an essential forum for the social development of children. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) viewed informal sport as providing a "zone of proximal development" within which children could grow and learn how to becoming social and interactive with peers. In an organized sport context controlled by adults, the developmental benefits of these experiences are mitigated, and Sutton-Smith (2001) goes so far as to argue that the lack of opportunities to play in, for example, an informal sport context may be subverting the evolutionary development of the species. In order for sport to provide individuals with a meaningful experience, control must be returned to participants themselves (Kleiber, 1983) -- as it is in an informal sport context.

Indirectly, the action/adventure sport literature has been one of the only substantive contributors to understanding the informal sport experience, although many of the researchers might be reticent to define action sports in these terms. Nevertheless, Beal's (1998) work on the subculture of skateboarding and Wheaton's (2007) research on the experiences of windsurfers - not to mention Irwin's (1973) seminal study on surfing – each allude to the experiential differences in less organized, non-team sport contexts. In these cases, participation in these informal contexts represents a challenge to the fundamental tenets of organized sport.

Understanding differences between organized and informal sport contexts represents an important step toward ending the divorce between sport and play, a quietly mounting concern of many in the field. Zeigler (2007), for instance, believes that sport management is at a crossroads where the mission, priorities, and direction of the field must be re-evaluated to place the individual back at the center of the sport experience. One means of beginning this process is to consider that a one-size-fits-all model of sport development may not be serving the best interests of the majority of participants (or non-participants). Perhaps sport development would benefit from creating a more diverse portfolio of programming for people seeking different sport experiences. In fact, Green (1997) has already demonstrated that a modified youth soccer program, which drew from elements of play and informal sport, reached a psychographically different market of participants than traditional youth soccer. From both a participant and an organization standpoint, cultivating informal sport experiences to supplement current offerings seems to make sense. Yet, regardless of the intuitive appeal of such an approach, research has shown that modified (i.e., play-centered/informal) sport programming faces immense challenges, both in terms of maintaining its distinctiveness from traditional sport over time (Chalip & Green, 1998) and overcoming the social forces that will attempt to

delegitimize it (Chalip & Scott, 2005). Often the biggest challenge in creating a new setting or context is overcoming the ontological constraints that rendered the status quo in the first place (Sarason, 1972).

In spite of the clear implications of examining settings for both sport development and sport-for-development systems, the challenge of overcoming the ontological constraints that have rendered the status quo is a formidable one -- and one that is reinforced by the theoretical dissociation between sport and play. The study of elite, organized sport is considered serious business; participative sport, especially that which is played in informal, unstructured settings, is thought of as merely frivolous play. Yet, play is elemental to sport. By most sport researcher's accounts, however, sport and play are linked only insomuch as the former evolved from the latter to create a more serious, and therefore more important, form of human movement. Modernity brought with it the inescapably widening chasm between the pejoratively primitive "play" and its increasingly formalized progeny "sport." By the middle of the twentieth century, social theorists such Johan Huizinga (1950) noted that the dialectical tensions between work and play in contemporary sport had already begun to corrode its fundamental connectedness to play: "Between them they push sport further and further away from the play-sphere proper until it becomes a thing *sui generis*: neither play nor earnest (p. 197). A decade later, Caillois (1961) expounded on Huizinga's general tenants to suggest that it was not the nature of the play itself that changed, but the change in perceived social function of play -- specifically games -- that precipitated the divergence between play and sport. In the literature that followed from these early analyses, the movement of sport away from its roots in play has been characterized as inevitable, if not evolutionary. While there have been scholars throughout the twentieth century who questioned whether this evolution may, in fact, represent more of a devolution or impoverishment in the

character of the sport experience (e.g., Devereaux, 1976), their objections were drowned out by the ever-present cheers of sport fanaticism from the public and researchers alike.

Ironically, play is now often cast as merely a simulacrum of sport, instead of the reverse. Rather than seeking to understand the commonalities between sport and play, sport researchers -- even prior to the establishment of an organization such as the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) -- placed an overt emphasis within the sport literature on delineating the taxonomic characteristics that distinguish one from the other. This otherwise academic exercise is significant because play forms the common foundation connecting sport and leisure/recreation at their most basic levels (c.f. Brohm, 1978; Rigauer, 1981). Therefore, in the intellectual differentiation of sport from play, scholars have generated the epiphenomenon of weakening sport's connectedness to its inherent play-element in practice as well as theory. When sport and play are conceptualized based on their relatively minimal points of distinction rather than on their broader commonalities, there have been unintended ontological repercussions in which the two begin to be seen as antithetical instead of intertwined.

As an example, Figler and Whitaker (1991) propose a continuum model of physical leisure activity wherein play and sport reside at nearly opposite ends of the spectrum. This assessment is based on the assumption that play is predicated on freedom, delimited time and space, the absence of rules, structure, outcome, and intrinsic motivation. Sport, on the other hand, is characterized by a more rigid structure, the presence of authority, and psychosocial investment in competitive outcomes. Similar to this model, Guttman (2004) proposes a classificatory system based on the work of Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1964) that categorizes physical contests (i.e., sports) as the most evolved form of play, so far removed from the roots of play as to just barely fall beneath its umbrella.

The practice of drawing such conceptual points of distinction between play and sport has the potential to obfuscate the importance of informal, unstructured forms of physical activity. Despite the tendency for many sport scholars to implicitly seek to divorce sport from play, the lines of demarcation separating the two have often been much less defined over time. Shore (1994) refers to sport as "marginal play," noting how "sport may be understood as a kind of compromise formation between two necessary but incompatible human impulses: playfulness and gamesmanship" (p. 361). Kenyon (1978) argues that sport is actually intrinsically motivating because it is an inherently social experience. McPherson, Curtis, and Loy (1989) expand this explanation, and that of Goffman (1961), in contending that sport is comprised of two fundamentally intrinsic elements, uncertain outcomes and sanctioned display, which make it a fun experience; these are two characteristics that other scholars have cited to assert the extrinsic nature of sport (cf. Figler & Whitaker, 1991).

In efforts to understand and define the boundary conditions necessary for an activity to be considered play, scholars have consistently employed dialectical reasoning to understand play as much through what it is not, as through what it is. Play, therefore, is *not* work (cf. Rigauer, 1981). While the sophistication of this notion has evolved over the years to reflect a more nuanced understanding of the many ways in which something can be "not-work," the dichotomy between play and work ostensibly remains a major crux of the overall disconnect. As sport, both in practice and academia, becomes increasingly focused on elite commercial sectors (i.e., more work-like), the areas of overlap between it and play logically narrow. Even participative sport opportunities, particularly in the United States, are often structured to mimic professional sport models. The pervasiveness of the professional model in sport programs for all ages and skill levels, therefore, would seem to be a determining factor in the distinctions made between sport and play.

Although relatively few athletes are actually paid to participate in sport, it is common for athletes to participate in order to obtain a particular reward or benefit. In this way, sport has become a highly goal-directed activity. As a result, enjoyment is often redefined to stem from the outcome of participation rather than the process of participation. Participants in other types of play-based activities such as recreation and leisure are more likely to value the enjoyment attained while participating, but the two are not mutually exclusive (cf. Pieper, 1963). It is plausible that participants in sport and other leisure settings can find enjoyment in both the process (i.e., in the moment) and the outcome of their participation. In fact, participants engaging in serious leisure report both types of enjoyment (Stebbins, 2007). Given that enjoyment of the process and the outcome clearly are not antithetical, the impetus for the contemporary divorce between the two, and more broadly between sport and play themselves, merits consideration as it may be either a cause or a symptom of discouraging trends in sport participation, public health, and the research examining both (cf. Bowers, Chalip, & Green, 2010a).

At least part of the distinction between play and sport is likely the result of differences in values. Many sport contexts in the United States are associated with typical "American values" such as competition and achievement (Kohn, 1992). Just as sport reflects cultural values, it is also a major vehicle for the transmission of these values. In fact, when interpreting fundamentally play-based social phenomena such as leisure and sport, it is imperative to understand that the constructed realities embedded within a culture both shape, and are shaped by, the particular form of play (cf. Schwartzman, 1978, 1986).

While it is not incorrect to highlight the dissimilarities between sport and play in the manner that many sport theoreticians have, few have then taken the next analytical step to question the axiological implications of asserting how sport is not play. The

implicit argument for the separation of the two might suggest that through infantilizing play as the frivolity of childhood, the study of organized sport may be viewed as more legitimate. As Chalip, Schwab, and Dustin (2010) note, however, the rejection of play as a unifying element connecting the sport-related academic disciplines (e.g., sport management and recreation) has only served to weaken the overall legitimacy of the study of sport. Instead of leveraging complementary bodies of research into a more comprehensive justification for an elevated role in society, sport-related academic fields have cannibalized each other in the pursuit of which field can outdistance itself furthest from play. In many ways, the devaluing of play within the study of sport (and in broader society) undermines the very essence of what makes sport indispensable within a culture (cf. Csikiszentmihalyi, 1981).

Given the inherent playfulness of sport participation in unstructured settings, the preceding discussion serves two functions: first, it provides a brief justification for the importance of understanding settings as they relate to sport development; second, it offers a basic overview of the theoretical basis for the underdevelopment of research examining unstructured sport settings within the current sport management literature. The findings reported in this three-part dissertation present a logical explanation for why sport management has narrowed its emphasis to exclude more playful, informal sport contexts, and why this paradigm limits the potential for sport to influence the experiences and outcomes of its participants. Through demonstrating the empirical relevance of unstructured sport settings to sport development, an integrative sport development paradigm is proposed in which organized sport settings and unstructured sport settings are positioned as complementary parts of an individual's overall sport experience.

In the first of the three studies in this dissertation, the theoretical understanding for this disconnect is extended to the practical realm through an examination of the

foundation of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM). In this mixed-method historical study involving the founding members of NASSM, the reasons underlying why the field of sport management has narrowed its focus over time to exclude the more playful forms of sport and physical activity are presented and discussed. In synthesizing the findings, the driving forces behind the emphasis on commercial, spectator sport for the field emerge as interconnected processes in NASSM's efforts to carve a sustainable niche for itself within the academic study of sport. These processes shifted the organization from its initially broad interpretation of the field as a forum for the management of all physical activity to its emphasis on spectator sport, with the reasons for this narrowing of the organization's scope having both a market-driven and cultural basis.

Having demonstrated the historical bases for sport management's narrow conceptualization of sport as almost exclusively that which takes place in organized, commercial settings, the second and third studies comprising this dissertation illustrate some of the experiential and developmental outcomes that are potentially overlooked in such a narrow definition of sport. In the second study, a phenomenological examination of pre-teen youth sport participants considers the experiences and attendant meanings derived from participation in both organized and unstructured sport settings not in terms of the dialectical differences between the settings, but in terms of how the experiences in the different settings actually inform one another in the creation of meanings for the boys in this community. In so doing, the analysis reveals that informal sports actually change the way participants think about their experiences playing organized sports, and vice versa. Although the fundamental differences in experiences engendered in the organized and unstructured settings are themselves significant, taxonomically separating them (i.e.,

organized versus unstructured) creates a false dichotomy that fails to account for the important meanings to emerge from their synthesis.

In the third study, the relative influences of time spent participating in organized sports and informal sports during childhood are assessed with respect to the development of general creativity. Like the phenomenological study, the results of this quantitative analysis again point to the importance of balancing participation in both organized and unstructured settings. The most creative individuals were those who spent roughly half of their sport participation time in each setting, as opposed to individuals with below-average creativity, who spent upwards of three-quarters of their sport participation time in organized settings. Therefore, the derivation of potential outcomes such as creativity do not appear to require a complete a dramatic reorientation from current youth sport development models, but only a shift toward a more balanced distribution of time spent playing in both organized and unstructured settings.

Combined, the results of these three studies demonstrate sport management's historical shift (in both research and practice) away from playful sport settings, and highlight the significant experiential and developmental outcomes of shifting merely a small portion of the resources currently dedicated to organized sport in order to allow for more opportunites to play informal sports in unstructured settings. This dissertation offers an alternative to the current youth sport development paradigm, which emphasizes increasingly structured forms of participation at earlier ages. Although it may seem counterintuitive to parents who envision their children as future professional athletes, more training and practice in highly structured settings may not equate to better overall results. Organized sports may be capable of producing certain outcomes, but as this dissertation attests, they are less capable of fostering some of the critical experiences and outcomes that occur in unstructured sport settings. Therefore, as this dissertation

demonstrates, an integrative sport development paradigm comprised of both organized and unstructured settings has the potential to transform what sport is capable of achieving -- both at the system level and in the individual lives of its participants.

Chapter 2: "Let the Marketplace be the Judge": The History of ~~NASSPAM~~ NASSM and the Narrowing of Sport Management

On October 4, 1984, Dr. Earle F. Zeigler wrote a letter to Dr. Janet Parks about an upcoming lecture she was to give at the University of Western Ontario. In the letter, Zeigler expressed the need to form a North American sport management organization to supplant the Sport Management Arts and Science Society (SMARTS). As the correspondence revealed, Zeigler, along with Trevor Slack and a handful of other colleagues, believed SMARTS to be overrun by "those concerned with professional sport and those who had profit as their primary concern, not the generalization and dissemination of knowledge about sport organizations" (Slack, Letter, September 14, 1984). Parks agreed with the sentiments expressed by Zeigler about the need for a new North American society, and over the course of the next year, their correspondence revealed much about the developing organization. In their letters to one another, and in the separate conversations with various other scholars described therein, an agenda emerged that would set the field of sport management in North America into motion.

The vision for this new organization sought to forge a path for sport management that would establish the field as unique and legitimate, while maintaining an inclusive intellectual environment related to the management of all sport and physical activity. For one, the organization would have "no formal identification" with pre-existing organizations such as SMARTS, the United States Sports Academy (USSA), the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD), or the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (CAHPER) (Zeigler, Letter, April 11, 1985). Sport management would stand on its own as an

important contributing member of the academy. While aiming to establish itself as unique and legitimate, sport management was also to retain a broad, inclusive purview drawing from a basis in the management of all types of physical activity, such as physical education and recreation. In fact, Zeigler was particularly wary of narrowing the scope of the field to the exclusion of related disciplines:

> Maybe this is a hopeless ideal, but I think not. In just about every society that has been established outside of the physical education realm in both the United States and Canada, the tendency has been to pander to the related discipline(s) and to slander and disregard poor old "PE." As I see it, this is being out and out unfair and just about traitorous to the field where almost all have our degrees. This serves no purpose in my opinion; we are simply making great efforts to give our field away and to condemn it to trade (not professional) status. There simply must be a way to have it both ways! This brings up the problem of an acceptable name for the new society. Despite what I have said above, I don't think the term "physical education" belong [sic] in the title. However, it should [sic] be only "sport management" either. Where does this leave us? The best that I can come up with at the moment is NASSPAM or the (North American?) Society for Sport and Physical Activity Management. I think that would do it -- and not specifically turn off any group. What do you think? (Zeigler, Letter, August 8, 1985)

In subsequent correspondence between the NASSM founders, the notion that sport management should be a home for teaching and conducting research about the management of all sectors of sport and physical activity for all populations remained an important issue. Correspondence between Parks and Bob Boucher a year later further conveyed this open stance toward fostering a diverse field of study. In the letter, Parks and Boucher agreed to "not put people in boxes" and that the "emphasis on pro sport should be downplayed -- SM [sic] is far bigger than pro sport" (Parks, Letter, October 2, 1986). As Parks and Boucher saw it, what becomes of the emerging field should be a reflection of the interests of the scholars who comprise it, and that the new sport management organization should "let the marketplace be the judge."

In accordance with this viewpoint, the official meetings between the founders of NASSM carried out the vision for an organization that would be broad in its disciplinary foci and would span the spectrum of sport and physical activity sectors, not just those sectors related to commercial sport. In the minds of Zeigler and many of the other individuals involved in this process, such an overemphasis on profiteering had been at the core of the undoing of SMARTS, and this was a mistake they sought to avoid in the founding of NASSM. In service to this broader vision for NASSM, Zeigler drafted an organizational constitution which contained a statement of purpose that was intentionally diverse and inclusive:

> The purpose of the Society shall be to promote, stimulate, and encourage study, research, scholarly writing, and professional development in the area of sport management (broadly interpreted). This statement of purpose means that members of this Society are concerned about the theoretical and applied aspects of management theory and practice specifically related to sport, exercise, dance, and plays as these enterprises are pursued by all sectors of the population. (2nd Draft, 16 November 1985)

For contemporary sport management scholars, it may come as a surprise to learn that the initial scope laid out by the founders of the field explicitly included the domains of exercise, dance, and play in addition to sport. It may come as an even greater surprise that, over 25 years since its approval by the executive council, this statement of purpose remains virtually unchanged today (http://www.nassm.com/InfoAbout/NASSM/Purpose). While the study of sport is undoubtedly at the core of the organization's purpose, the initial vision for NASSM was for an organization that incorporated the management of all types of physical activity and human movement within its purview. Yet, a cursory examination of the publication history within the *Journal of Sport Management*, the organization's official journal and the voice for the field's research interests and developments, suggests that this inclusive vision charted by the founders has not been

carried out by NASSM and its members. In fact, in the over two decades since the establishment of the *Journal of Sport Management* by the early founders, little research has been published related to exercise, dance, and play, the other three domains identified within the statement of purpose. A search through the journal's publication archives reveals that while a few dozen empirical research articles investigate exercise programming and facilities, only one empirical study pertains (incidentally) to dance (viz., Hata & Umezawa, 1995) and only two incorporate play (viz., Green, 1997; Hill & Green, 2008).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to seek out an understanding of the historical legitimation of sport management as a field, and to understand the roots of its narrowing from a broader interpretation of sport and physical activity over time to one emphasizing the very professional, commercial interests which the organization sought to escape from in its founding. In order to undertake such an abstract analysis, this study begins at the beginning, so to speak, in examining the North American Society for Sport Management as it was first conceived by the founders of the organization themselves. Then key processes related to the development of the field are indentified, specifically the causes for the divergence from the initial purpose of NASSM and the concomitant convergence in the scope of what constitutes "sport management" over time. In essence, this study asks those who believed that analyses of play, dance, and exercise should be three of the four pillars of sport management scholarship about the relative absence of non-sport physical activity within the organization's efforts in the decades thereafter. Moreover, this analysis explores the deliberations about the conceptions of sport and physical activity amongst the executive council at the time of the organization's founding, and whether the place of play, dance, and exercise has changed throughout the growth and development of the organization.

METHOD

This study utilized a mixed-method approach to examine the historical foundation of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), and to consider the development of the field of sport management as a whole. In order to produce a thorough, contextualized analysis of the trajectory of sport management over the roughly 25 years since the founding of NASSM, this study integrated both a traditional historiography component and a qualitative component which incorporated the Delphi method as a methodological lens (Martino, 1983). The primary analytic focus of the study emphasized the findings resulting from the Delphi technique, but the historiography served an essential function in situating the historical climate and debate in a less retrospective, more contemporaneous manner.

Historiography

The historiography of the founding and development of NASSM was derived through an analysis of the organization's historical documents, made possible through access to the digitized organizational archives housed at Bowling Green State University. The archives include pre-formation and early organizational correspondence between founding members, executive council meeting minutes from 1985 to present, all drafts of organizational operating codes, ethical codes, and constitutions, as well as a number of documents pertaining to the establishment of the yearly conference and the *Journal of Sport Management*. In addition, the archives also house digitized video of conference panel discussions in which the original NASSM founders reflect on aspects of the organization's history. All of these sources were consulted prior to the formulation of this study and incorporated into the development of the research questions and purpose driving this study. Throughout the study, pertinent documents were re-examined in order to situate and interpret the findings emerging from the participant data.

In addition to examining the digitized NASSM archives, the archival analysis of the *Journal of Sport Management* publications alluded to in the introduction was also conducted to establish the certitude of the lack of research presence for the non-sport (i.e., play, dance, and exercise) domains outlined in the organization's constitution. This archival analysis involved an article-by-article examination of the journal's entire publication history since its first issue in January of 1987 through the March of 2011 issue. The article-by-article examination was then cross-checked against electronic searches within the journal for keywords (e.g., "exercise," "dance," "play") to ensure that pertinent articles had not been inadvertently overlooked in the manual examination process. Articles were identified based on explicit reference to the theoretical or practical aspects of the three non-sport domains.

Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique offers an approach that focuses on the responses of a panel of experts in a given realm (Martino, 1983). The technique was originally designed to "elicit judgments on problems that are highly complex and necessarily subjective, requiring significant levels of knowledge and expertise on the part of the respondent" (Garrod & Fyall, 2005, p. 86). In this study, the Delphi technique allowed those scholars involved in the founding of the field of sport management to discover their points of agreement and disagreement about the past, present, and future of sport management.

Procedures

Drawing from the organizational archives, expert panelists were pre-determined for participation through an examination of the historical record indicating their presence at formative meetings for NASSM. Based on these records and their agreement to participate following an email solicitation explaining the aims of the project, ten original

founders of NASSM participated in the study. The commitment to participate required the ten founders to respond to rounds of questions distributed via email -- in accordance with the format of the Delphi, which is comprised of iterated rounds of questions -- with each round building on the last (Martino, 1983). In the case of this study, the Delphi technique was employed to collect, synthesize, and present participants' responses to a series of prompts designed to elicit retrospection about the historical foundation of NASSM by the founders who lived this experience.

Participants

Participants in this study were ten of the initial NASSM founders present at the initial organizational meetings during the Fall of 1985 and the Spring of 1986. Potential participants were identified through archival research of the pre-NASSM meeting minutes. Although more than ten founders were present at these early meetings, full representation in this study was precluded by at least one of the following issues: a founder's lack of response to email solicitation, the fact that a founder had left the field and no longer felt comfortable commenting on sport management's past and present, or the fact that the founder had passed away. Of the ten initial participants, eight completed the entire study, with two of the founders withdrawing after the first round because they had left the academic field of sport management long enough ago as to feel uncomfortable commenting on the evolution of the field beyond their early experiences with it.

DATA ANALYSIS

Findings from each round were compiled, synthesized, stripped of any identifiers, and provided back to the panelists for response. Per the methodological protocol of the study, participant anonymity was maintained through the removal of identifying

information prior to synthesizing and re-presenting responses for the next phase of panel response. Further, the decision was made that panelists not be identified (even with pseudonyms) in the reporting of the data because of the sensitive nature of the comments. In each successive round, panelists were prompted to explain their responses and to identify areas of agreement or disagreement to other panelists' responses. The literature indicates that three iterations are sufficient for identifying points of consensus and disagreement (Costa, 2005; Dietz, 1987). Rather than utilizing Weber's (1990) procedure for content analyzing the data to identify themes as Costa (2005) did, the resulting qualitative data were collated and organized by question to initially include every response from every panelist. This approach was appropriate because of the historical nature of this inquiry and the effort to understand, at least initially, everything that may have contributed to the development of the field.

Round 1

In Round 1, panelists were asked to respond to an initial round of questions designed to stimulate reflection about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences regarding the early development of the field of sport management -- primarily with respect to the historical period during NASSM's formation (see Appendix A for research questions). In responding to each question, panelists were encouraged to write as much or as little as they liked, but to keep in mind that the depth and richness of their responses would have a direct impact on the depth and richness of the data that the panel considered in forthcoming iterations. Panelists were also encouraged to elaborate beyond the parameters outlined in each question with anecdotes or issues that they believed to be germane to the understanding of this history.

Round 2

In the second round of questions, panelists responded to a consolidated and synthesized representation of the panel's responses to the first round of questions in order to elaborate on and clarify the various points of agreement and points of disputation. Per the methodological protocol of the Delphi technique, the second round of questions derived directly from the panel's responses to the first round, and in so doing, afforded panelists two different opportunities: to address the initial responses of the panel, with the option to reply to specific assertions, amend their own responses, and/or elaborate on any aspect of the debate; and, to expand their reflection in responding to questions that emerged as a result of the points of agreement and disputation within the responses offered by panelists. Panelists were provided a synthesized report of all panelist responses to each question from Round 1, and instructed to first comment directly about the Round 1 responses, and to then answer the additional questions posed to elicit further consideration of points raised (or sometimes not raised) within the initial responses (see Appendix A).

Round 3

In the third and final round, the format shifted to a more simplified structure that asked panelists to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale with statements of consensus that emerged from the first two rounds (see Appendix B). The change in format became salient for two reasons. First, the amount of data generated from panel responses to Rounds 1 and 2 had become prohibitively large and complex to ask each panelist to read and respond to the myriad points raised within the over 70 pages. Second, the simplified format permitted panelists to address their level of individual agreement with the major points of consensus to emerge from the many topics and experiences broached in the first two rounds. For panelists who wanted the option to

clarify their ratings, space was provided beneath each item for them to supplement their rating with additional comments.

RESULTS

The organization which began with a broad statement of purpose proclaiming "…that members of this Society are concerned about the theoretical and applied aspects of management theory and practice specifically related to sport, exercise, dance, and plays as these enterprises are pursued by all sectors of the population," has since witnessed a trend in which many members seem to have stopped reading after the word "sport" (2nd Draft, 16 November 1985). In order to more clearly articulate the history of this narrowing (toward, in particular, the emphasis on professional and college sport), the results of the present analysis are organized not by the order of original questions or by listing all of the major themes to emerge from each, but instead by the processual linkages explicated throughout the responses of the NASSM founders panel. Further, in order to assist with the logical ordering of these processes and linkages, the relevant statements of consensus presented in Round 3 of the study are employed to provide the framework for the organization of the argument articulated in this analysis (see Table 1). For a full list of the Round 3 items and responses, see Appendix B.

Within Table 1, the mean and standard deviation are provided for each of the statements to demonstrate the level of agreement expressed by the panel with respect to each item. For each of the statements included in the framework, the panel conveyed satisfactory levels of agreement to ensure a valid representation of the overall thoughts and experiences of the group of founders participating in this study.

Table 1: Organizing Framework and Descriptive Statistics for Statements of Consensus (*n*=8)

Item (1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly Agree)	***Mean* (*SD*)**
Phase 1: The Founders Define a Broad Scope for the Field	
At the start of NASSM, it was important to ensure a broad range of domains for sport management scholars to study.	4.50 (.76)
At the start of NASSM, there were few outlets for research about the management of professional and college sport.	4.88 (.35)
At the start of NASSM, there were few outlets for research on the management of participant sport.	4.75 (.46)
Phase 2: Sport Management Must Establish Itself as a Unique Discipline	
At the start of NASSM, it was necessary to differentiate sport management (and NASSM) from other fields (e.g., physical education, recreation) and organizations.	4.25 (.71)
A key driving force in the founding of NASSM was the creation of a distinctive discipline.	4.63 (.74)
Phase 3: Let the "Marketplace" Decide	
The emphasis on professional and college sport in the field of sport management has been driven by "market" demands, including student demand.	3.88 (.99)
The field of sport management has made significant strides in elaborating the nuances of different realms of study (e.g., marketing, finance, law, management) within the context of entertainment/spectator sport.	4.13 (1.36)
Phase 4: Sport Management Narrows	
The field of sport management is narrower in the types of sport contexts its scholars study than the original vision for the organization (viz., the NASSM constitution, and statement of purpose therein).	4.14 (.90)
NASSM originally envisioned participant-based sport as a core domain of sport management.	3.43 (1.40)
Informal sport and play are not under the current purview of sport management scholarship.	4.25 (1.16)

These statements from Round 3 serve as an outline for the combined panel responses from Rounds 1 and 2 which gave rise to them. In synthesizing the processes, four phases emerge in the historical narrowing of sport management's scope. First, the founders broadly defined the field to include the management of virtually all types of human movement and physical activity in order to allow NASSM the space to grow and evolve with the interests of its members. As Table 1 indicates, there was high agreement (and low response variance) to the statements expressing the need to define a broad scope for the field and for the existence of more research outlets for the study of organized sport at the time. Second, the founders set out to establish sport management as a unique field of study with NASSM as the main vehicle driving this establishment, as evidenced by the high levels of agreement to the statements about differentiating sport management and creating a distinctive discipline. In the third phase, the founders let the "marketplace" of ideas and interests chart the direction of the unique area that sport management carves out for itself (through the editorial policies of the *Journal of Sport Management*). The levels of agreement were slightly weaker than in the other phases to the statement that the emphasis on professional and college sport was driven by market forces (and that the emphasis in these areas has led to a better empirical elaboration of this context), but still indicated a tendency toward agreement. Finally, in the fourth phase the scope of the field narrows over time to focus primarily on professional and major college sport to the exclusion of the initially broad range of foci identified in the NASSM constitution. The panel agreed with the statements that NASSM has become narrower in its focus than they initially intended, and that informal sport and play are not currently represented in the research literature. The lowest level of agreement (and the highest level of response variability) expressed among these items related to the statement that participant sport was an initial core domain of sport management, which provides further evidence for the

ambiguous place of non-spectator sport within NASSM. The reasons underlying this narrowing in scope are discussed in detail within each phase.

Phase 1: The Founders Define a Broad Scope for the Field

One of the key driving forces behind the establishment of a the new field of study was to broadly define the field in a manner that would not exclude members with varied interests in the management of all forms of physical activity. After all, SMARTS had contributed to the need to form this new organization to a certain degree by permitting a narrow scope to dominate its purview. As a result, the role that most founders viewed for themselves in the process was to get the field up and running and let the evolving interests of the members dictate the scope of the field over time. In fact, most make no specific reference to the identification of sport, exercise, play, and dance as the areas of focus for sport management research. The founders wanted to establish NASSM as quickly as possible and to set the policies governing scope to allow for the organization to grow along with the field. As one panelist put it, "Keep in mind that we were primarily concerned about creating an organization, not about the nitty-gritty."

Generally, a number of panelists highlighted that the most important initial focus was on getting the field established, after which sport management could evolve to define itself:

> I believe that the most important focus at the time of the founding of the society was the academic field itself, e.g., undergraduate as well as graduate curricula. As the academic courses, programs, and curricular standards have developed, so too have the more specific topical interests and research of those topics.

As the field sought to establish its identity, the most natural starting points proved to be the areas in which the founders already conducted research:

> Originally, it was useful to conduct research on what sport management is or should be – thus some philosophical, historical, and survey research on what others in the field were doing.
>
> The major focus at that time was on management theory, organizational behavior, sport history/philosophy and gender issues as a reflection of the interests of the founding members. The younger scholars have extended this narrow focus to other areas such as sport law, sport finance, sport marketing, sport economics, etc.

As a result of this shared overall mentality, the process of establishing NASSM was one characterized far more often by harmony than discord. While this is certainly not to assert that the proceedings were without their share of healthy debate, seven of the ten panelists explicitly referenced the absence of conflict during the discussions about what the scope of sport management was to be (in Round 1):

> I do not recall that there were conflicts in terms of the scope of NASSM…
>
> No, we were pretty open and inclusive.
>
> There was no conflict or differences of opinion on the scope of NASSM.
>
> I do not recall any conflicts per se; there was excellent debate to clarify the need for rigorous research methods and results which could be applied to the management of sport.
>
> I do not recall any particular contrary points of view…
>
> Quite frankly I do not recall any particular conflicts. People had some slightly different points of view but people were willing to resolve issues and most importantly take on responsibilities and volunteer to do whatever was necessary to get the organization off the ground.
>
> I do not believe there were any conflicts in this regard.

The shared goal to legitimize the field through developing a "a good academic vehicle," as one panelist put it, that could effectively bridge a broad range of interests manifested itself in the drafting of a constitution which outlined NASSM's purpose, as another panelist reminded, "to promote, stimulate, and encourage study, research, scholarly writing, and professional development in the area of sport management

(broadly interpreted)." In the words of another panelist, "the field of sport management was/is considered multidisciplinary in nature and is focused on research and practice of ethical management of the enterprises associated with sport, recreation, and dance as practiced by all segments of society." The panelists' very high levels of agreement with the statements in Round 3 that there were few outlets for research into both elite, commercial sport (4.88) and recreational, participative sport (4.75) suggest that such a broad scope made a great deal of sense at that time.

At least one panelist, however, did not recall the inclusion of these specific domains as a major area of discussion in the formation of NASSM: "I don't recall any debate (friendly) regarding the status of play/recreation and how these areas overlapped with or were defined as different within sport management." A second panelist noted that "we were not really worried about domains. We did, however, want to be inclusive." However, as another panelist clarifies, establishing a broad organizational purview was an explicit goal at the early meetings: "My hope here was that NASSM would be concerned with the management of sport and physical activity within both the public sector AND education. Physical activity was to be broadly interpreted. I don't think I was alone in this regard."

According to another panelist, the broad scope was needed to ensure that the field represented the diverse interests of its members: "The various foci [were] needed within the broad scope of sport management to show the various dimensions of the field and that expertise from a broad cross section of research methods/techniques and theories are needed to explore the dimensions." The organizational mechanism put in place by the founders to help guide the field in the process of broadly defining itself was the establishment of the *Journal of Sport Management*, which would serve as the voice for NASSM's research interests. One panelist noted,

> As I recall, the discussions of research areas were primarily associated with papers that were eligible to be accepted in *JSM*, which was designed to reflect and support the purpose of NASSM. The editorial policy that was published in volume 1, issue 1 of *JSM* identified the following areas of research: "sport, exercise, dance, and play."

An editorial policy encompassing "sport, exercise, dance, and play" undeniably fosters a broad interpretation of sport management as a field. Having said that, one would be hard-pressed to find much research on dance and play (and to a lesser extent, exercise) published in an outlet like *JSM* today. While the breadth of research within "sport" has expanded tremendously throughout the years, research under the umbrellas of the management of other domains of physical activity seems to have remained in an arrested state of development within sport management. As one panelist concedes,

> The domains listed in volume 1, issue 1 of *JSM* reflected the breadth of the area that the founders agreed upon. We were a very congenial group and respected each other's opinions, and those domains emerged from the democratic process. Our decisions were not always unanimous. As has been noted, the original domains have since narrowed in practice.

Phase 2: Sport Management Must Try to Position Itself as a Unique Discipline

As the brief historiography recounted in the opening of this article attests, the narrowing alluded to by the founder in the previous paragraph may have started with the perception that sport management needed to establish itself as a unique discipline from the pre-existing organizations such as SMARTS, AAHPERD, CAHPER, and USSA. Links to the established organizations in the early 1980s offered little opportunity for the field to grow to its potential. As one panelist noted, "The point was that AAHPERD and CAHPER (Canada) were not doing enough in the area, so..."). Therefore, in reflecting on the initial discussions about what NASSM should or could become, the overwhelming majority of the panelists highlighted - in one way or another - that the overarching need to legitimize sport management as a scholarly field superceded debate regarding other

issues; for example, the inclusion and exclusion of specific domains under its umbrella. In order to be accepted as a legitimate field of study, the panel recalled the importance of laying the foundation for a unique discipline which could effectively wed theory and practice in a way that other organizations appeared unable to do. The following responses exemplify the panel's overall recollection:

> The scholarly aspects of an organization such as NASSM were important in order to be accepted as a unique field of study and inquiry on both the research and practical level.

> I have little real recollection of the exact domains, but I was aware of an immediate need for legitimacy by the establishment of the *Journal of Sport Management* at the earliest possible date.

In order to be established as a legitimate field of study, it was viewed as imperative that sport management "stand alone" as its own unique field, separate from physical education:

> A professional discussion regarding the separation of physical education related courses from sport management courses took place. Sport management was to stand alone and not be a part of physical education pedagogy in order to establish credibility.

> …several studies were conducted in an effort to discover the coursework that sport management programs should offer. The founders were very specific that sport management should be different from physical education professional preparation. They were alarmed that although many colleges and universities were changing the name of their PE programs to "sport management" in order to attract students, they weren't changing the content of the programs. The NASSM founders found this practice to be counter to the values and ethics of higher education.

The efforts to separate from physical education derived, according to one panelist, from a desire for sport management to be taken more seriously than physical education traditionally had:

> There is one historical point that I would like to make, and it may apply to some of us who were a little older. During the 1960s, programs in Education and even

> more so in Physical Education came under heavy criticism, primarily because the old USSR had put up "Sputnik" in 1957. This had an immediate impact on education, and higher education in particular, due to fact that the Russians suddenly appeared to have advanced significantly ahead in science education. All of North American education came under fire from a variety of critics; faculties of Education came under particular heavy criticism for offering "Mickey Mouse" courses and doing little meaningful research. As a part of Education, Physical Education was viewed as the worst of the worst, and within P.E. "Administration" courses were criticized as the bottom of the barrel. This led to great soul searching and the search for [the] defining of our real "discipline" and "field of knowledge," in many cases "Admin." Courses were given no house room. Hence, a movement for a "theoretical base" in sport management began, led primarily by Earle Zeigler and many of his master's and doctoral students at the University of Illinois-Champaign/Urbana. Thus, our preoccupation with theory and solid research 15-20 years later when NASSM was envisioned.

Phase 3: Let the "Marketplace" Decide

At the heart of the narrowing was a staunch adherence by the NASSM founders to allow the marketplace to decide what sport management would become. In this sense, the "marketplace" refers not to strict economic and financial considerations, but instead to the more democratic notion that the interests and ideas of the majority of people would emerge as the focus (or foci) of the organization. Those determining the marketplace were NASSM members and scholars, as well as students enrolling in sport management programs, and the direction of the organization would be driven by the people who comprised it. The reticence of the panelists to depart from this stance, even 25 years later, was clear. When asked to rank the value of different domains within sport to the field of sport management, many of the panelists expressed discomfort with having to place different domains into a hierarchy, even though the publication history of the *Journal of Sport Management* has indirectly done this since its first publication.

When asked to rank the importance of entertainment-based sport, non-commercial organized sport, informal recreational sport, and play, many of the panelists bristled at the intellectual exercise. One panelist toed the proverbial party line in asserting that the

importance of a domain would vary depending on the individual: "a management perspective can further the goals of all the domains noted above...It would depend on each person's background." Another panelist worried about the adequacy of the definitions for each domain and the distinctions between them, while another wondered about the way in which we were measuring the "importance" of each domain. As yet another panelist eloquently put it, "With due respect, it would do a disservice to the field to rank its sub-components. The people who work and play in each of the above areas feels their "domain" is important." Two other panelists offered further caution against the use of a hierarchy, even for heuristic purposes:

> Why is it necessary to establish an hierarchy? In some situations due to size or staffing, or particular markets, it may be useful to shape experiences to fill a particular need. But it seems to me that it may be risky to establish an hierarchy.
>
> A useful exercise would be to identify the sub domains of management science and then to further specify the sub sets that should be researched and thereby add to the body of knowledge in an orderly fashion.

The rankings of the panelists who did respond directly to the question, however, indicated differences in the values underlying this marketplace, especially with regard to differences in rationale about how to consider a domain's relative "importance." One panelist "ranked them on the basis of profit-making potential":

> 1. Entertainment-based sport (professional, intercollegiate, spectacle)
>
> 2. Organized sport (intercollegiate, youth sport)
>
> 3. Informal sport (youth sport, recreation)
>
> 4. Play (recreation)

Two other panelists corroborated these rankings in noting,

> 1. Entertainment [Sport] – people have an expectation to have it organized and presented professionally

> 2. Organized Sport – participants have the right to participate in a well organized environment
>
> 3. Informal Sport – less organized, but the program will have some organizational attributes
>
> 4. Play – less formal organizational structure, but elements of managing time and resources
>
> Of the domains mentioned, sport management would include entertainment-based sport and organized sport. It seems to me that study and research related to informal sport and play belong to physical education and/or recreation but not to sport management.

Alternatively, another panelist ranked organized sport and informal sport as more important domains due to the relative weight of participant sport within the sport industry: "As more that 60% of the sport industry is participant sport (organized and informal), I would rank it much higher than entertainment." Finally, one panelist eschewed ranking the different domains in pondering the role of sport in people's lives:

> Sport involvement for personal health and 'growth' should be an essential part of "the good life." I am beginning to wonder if there should be any such thing as "professional" sport...

The expression of such disparate viewpoints yields a number of potential questions, particularly with respect to the values driving the intellectual marketplace of sport management. If founders of the field are basing the "importance" of a domain to sport management on profit-making potential versus its contribution to "the good life" they would naturally come to rank sectors much differently. One panelist added a caveat to the differences between various panelists' opinions on the importance of different domains to sport management:

> Another confounding variable is that, in general, Canadian and U.S. academics have different worldviews…I would speculate that themes in your results could be categorized by country.

Although the themes are not categorized by country, the point raises an interesting issue about the differences in values influencing perceptions about what is deemed important to sport. The panel was further asked to consider what criteria to use in determining the importance of a sector or domain to sport management. In spite of the clear evidence that commercialized forms of sport have occupied the majority of the work published in the *Journal of Sport Management*, many of the panelists still expressed discomfort at the notion of ranking what is valuable to sport, captured in one panelist's statement, "I think this question is too broad. The answer can be different for each sector of sport. Sport serves several roles, depending on the context." Two other panelists take that logic a step further and suggest that the value of sport is so particular to each individual or each sector that it is impossible to generalize:

> I'm not certain this can be answered. Each individual values sport for different reasons and some not at all.

Like beauty, what is important for sport management is in the eye of the beholder. One panelist finally explicated what many of the others had only implicitly alluded to in the discussion: "Let the marketplace decide! I can't let my personal biases dictate what is important to other people in other programs."

Phase 4: Sport Management Narrows

Although there is an overriding sense that the research examining commercial and entertainment-based sport (i.e., professional sport and major college athletics) has become much more elaborated and diverse within this particular context, the breadth of contexts which sport managers study seems to have, at the same time, narrowed considerably in terms of examining different settings for sport and physical activity. Two panelists expressed disappointment with the apparent lack of interest/focus on the management of, for example, participant sport for non-elite populations:

> I am pleased with the direction that sport management and NASSM has taken. I would be even more pleased if we take greater interest in and emphasize participant sport.
>
> I am delighted with the growth of the society. I am disappointed that the management of sport and physical activity for 90% plus of children and youth is being essentially ignored.

Panelists were asked to what extent they viewed this to be the case, and whether the narrowing in the contexts of study since NASSM's inception poses a potential problem for the field. Two panelists acknowledged the narrowing of contextual focus over the years, but did not view this phenomenon as a significant concern for sport management:

> NASSM can't be all things to all people, there are other academic vehicles for other areas.
>
> It might be the case, but I don't see it as a problem.

Yet, two other panelists highlighted that this occurrence should be greater cause for concern:

> Yes, Division 1 athletics and pro sport are prominent. Amateur sport, children's sport and the European "sport for all" areas are under represented in our research.
>
> It is unfortunate that the major focus has been on entertainment sport. As I have shown elsewhere entertainment sport is only one third of the sport industry. We need to focus more on participant sport.

One panelist went so far as to suggest that the narrow focus on primarily elite, commercial sport is an affront to the scope outlined within the initial NASSM constitution, in which participant sport for all populations was identified as a key area of concern:

> …two primary areas of concern were designated. Sport and physical activity (!) management in (1) the public sector and (2) within education. Note: In my opinion this is where we have dropped the ball.

Many of the panelists took issue with this assessment that sport management has "dropped the ball" in its lack of attention to these areas, and they cite a few different rationales for their disagreement (e.g., "I am not in agreement with this belief"; "Absolutely not. Although I retired…my colleagues, with whom I have kept in touch, are active contributing members in the public and education sectors"). First, two panelists argue that this may not be the role of sport managers, particularly if the management of these sectors does not meet the interests of the members of NASSM:

> Perhaps this is not our role. We have resisted the temptation to be a lobby group. While this is an important consideration, local, state, and provincial government's should be responsible in this area.
>
> NASSM's main vehicles for doing something are the conference and the journal. The content and focus of what NASSM produces is not directed by the "management" but evolves from what the members provide and are interested in. There is no key player who has the "ball to drop" – NASSM is what it is…and that's fine with me….

Two other panelists contend that through studying collegiate sport and through including public and education-based sport in course material, sport management is taking an active enough role in these areas:

> The study of collegiate sports in both the US and Canada, and the investigations over sport governing bodies around the world and the role of governments in promoting sport and supporting sport governing bodies have been done well. So I would not say that we dropped the ball in these areas.
>
> I'm not sure why this person thinks we have dropped the ball. Public sport and educational sport are certainly covered in our textbooks, particularly those written at the introductory level. Most students, however, do not choose these venues as foci of their doctoral programs. Consequently, if a person looks only at our research, it could appear that these areas are omitted from the field. Also, those sport management majors who go on to careers in public sport or educational sport (intramurals) have their own professional organizations and publications and probably would not choose to be members of NASSM.

There are two other panelists, however, who agree with the initial sentiment that sport management may have "dropped the ball" in these areas, and that the lack of attention paid to these sectors stems from many in the field's infatuation with higher-profile "business interests":

> I share this belief to some extent. I think that sport management has become preoccupied with pro/college sport and in fact my guess is that this is in part what attracts a lot of incoming sport management students. This was reinforced by a conversation I had in London [at the 2011 NASSM Conference] with a current director of a program that is literally swamped by numbers of students. She commented that when she first meets with students she asks, "Why do you want to come into this program?" The overwhelming number of students respond that they envision a rather glamorous position in professional sport. To her credit she honestly replies, "Well the jobs you are most likely to find are low level jobs such as selling tickets, etc., not as GM's or other high profile positions." I admired her honesty. I tend to think that we have too often forgotten people in the schools, in recreation management positions, fitness businesses, etc.
>
> The "business interests" of sport have taken over…Why? Because society really doesn't understand and appreciate what exercise, play, and dance involvement could mean to the future of humankind. And I don't think NASSM "has a mind to change society's mind." [My concern is] that the field is simply turning out a lot of young people with "stars in their eyes" at both the undergraduate and graduate levels who will either become university instructors or second-level people in a sport industry promoting crass professionalism and "spectatoritis" as "sport heroes" are developed for the presumed adulation of the masses.

One panelist feels strongly that sport management is falling short in its responsibility to prepare professionals to live and work in a diverse, evolving sport landscape:

> The profession of sport and physical activity management needs to develop a sound body of knowledge based on scholarly effort to determine exactly what it is that organized sport is accomplishing in the world. Sport needs a developing theory desperately! It is for this reason that I have asked President James Zhang and his executive to consider recommending to the membership of the North American Society for Sport Management that the Society begin the development of an ongoing, online body of knowledge in the form of ordered generalizations about the professional efforts of our practitioners. Our practicing professionals need to know (1) what they are doing, (2) what its effects are, and (3) how they can improve their efforts so that they are certain that as management's

> practitioners in sport and physical activity they are making a positive contribution to the future of world society. In conclusion, I am forced to ask again: "Exactly what is it that we are promoting, and why are we doing it?" Frankly, I greatly fear the answer. Maybe it's my age, but I am "running scared"! I am arguing here today that this plight has developed because we haven't created a theory of sport and related physical activity that permits us to assess whether sport, for example, is fulfilling its presumed function of promoting good in a society. In addition, I must ask: "Why do most sport philosophy and social-science scholars assiduously avoid scholarly consideration of exercise and dance as part of their domain?" At present these scholars tend definitely to be elitist with their "heads in the sand."

This same panelist attributed the perceived emphasis on entertainment-based sport to be a byproduct of the belief that "The large majority of people seem to have been 'taken in' by the forces of democracy, nationalism, and capitalism." Another panelist believes that profit has emerged as the overriding value of sport, and expresses great concern about the sport landscape that this value has produced:

> I have become dismayed by the arms race in intercollegiate athletics, specifically football and basketball. I'm about ready to support those who think college towns should have pro [football] and [basketball] teams that are unrelated to the university except for the use of their facilities (which they would rent). The athletes could be paid and could use the money to pay for schooling or for anything else. Athletes would be employees, not necessarily students. The adults' race to the top and university presidents' love affair with athletics has ruined football and, increasingly, basketball for the athletes…It seems to me that profit (equate with winning) has certainly become the over-riding concern in both pro and college sport. In my humble opinion it has led to the view that the participant is just a replaceable item (another piece of meat so to speak), and they are frequently treated as such. It has also led to unethical practices, unsportsmanlike conduct, and a demeaning of the true value of sport. In my opinion, there is a need for a much greater emphasis on sound philosophy, values, and ethics. Cheating has often been justified by reactions such as "everyone does it" and "two wrongs must make a right". This is unfortunate in my opinion. In my view, Vince Lombardi did no one a favor when he reputedly commented, "Winning is not the only thing, it is everything!"

Other panelists expressed greater hope that participant sport could grow into a larger research emphasis for sport managers through collaborations and shifting values:

> The response here may be obvious given the economic status and perceived 'glamorous' role and value of entertainment sport. Perhaps sport management needs to take a greater role in participant sport. The market for participant sport is there, it is just not supported by sport management researchers.
>
> We should look to collaborating with NIRSA and European "Sport for All" Associations. The need to "manage well" in these organizations is just as accurate as the Div. 1 and pro sport forums.
>
> Once again, participant sport is 60% of the industry. But it consists of nearly 350 million people spending a few dollars here and there. That is why we had not paid much attention to it. But with societal emphasis on health, fitness, and reduction of obesity, we would have to focus more on this area.

Still, two of the panelists contended the point that NASSM (and sport management on the whole) have under-examined participant sport:

> …it could be that most of the folks that contribute to sport management information/knowledge are associated with universities and colleges. These folks probably write and speak about what they see and relate to on a regular basis…Pitts & Pedersen's JSM 2005 article found that 40% of all articles related to intercollegiate athletics, next highest (13.3%) was participant sport and professional sport was third at 12.8%. Additionally, it is interesting to note that Mowrey's findings showed "different interests in sport industry segments between the three associations. Whereas EASM papers were focused on governance and SMAANZ papers were focused on tourism and leisure based sport management, the NASSM papers were centered around intercollegiate sport."
>
> …I do have a couple of questions: (1) What evidence is there that participant sport has been "overlooked as opposed to entertainment sport"? (2) Are you talking about the prominence of entertainment sport in the curricula, the research, the jobs the students get, or all of the above? Just because academics don't study and publish research on grassroots sport to the extent that they study professional and intercollegiate sport doesn't mean that students aren't learning about all kinds of sport in their programs and getting jobs in grassroots sport.

Aside from these two objections, there was general agreement about the lack of emphasis on participant sport. Panelists were also asked to consider the lack of development within the major areas (beyond sport) that were identified as important in the initial NASSM constitution and statement of purpose, namely play and dance. Two

panelists agreed that these other domains have seemed to receive less emphasis, at least according to the publication history of the *Journal of Sport Management*:

> I am in agreement with the assertion that play and dance have not developed as an 'area within sport management'. While sport management was broadly defined to include these areas, nothing to date has emerged within the literature to this effect.
>
> I do not recall discussions regarding the sub areas of dance and play within NASSM, but would suggest that an "inventory" of published papers in JSM would be an indicator of their inclusion or exclusion. A lack of attention, if substantiated, could be the result of the creation of separate conferences and publications that focus specifically on dance and play.

Further, the panelists were asked to delve more deeply into both their opinions about the role of dance and play within sport management at the time of NASSM's founding, and to speculate about the reasons why these areas have received such comparatively minimal attention over the ensuing years. Virtually uniformly, panelists had little objection to the inclusion of dance and play within the original jurisdiction of sport management:

> I was comfortable with it…. We "defined" sport management "broadly" and dance & play were still part of the academic programs that many of us worked with.
>
> Dance & play are forms of human movement. They deserve to be "managed well" like other forms.
>
> I believe at first, I did consider that dance and play had a place within the definition of sport management, particularly within the definition of dance as competition (i.e. dance sport), but play to me was a theoretical perspective inherent in game and sport – not sport management per se.

Other panelists asserted that the inclusion of this broader spectrum of domains was primarily attributable to the efforts of Earle Zeigler:

> My guess is that the "dance and play" phrase came from Earle Zeigler who provided us with our first draft of the constitution. If you review his earlier writings, and even his current writings, you will notice that he still argues for the

> inclusion of these terms in our broader field, eg. "sport, dance and exercise". I know that he continues to dislike the name "Kinesiology" (for that matter so do I).
>
> The dance, play provisions were Earle Zeigler's input. Some may have been influenced by AAHPERD and CAPHER.

Yet, in spite of the relative acceptance of these original domains as legitimate areas of inquiry for the evolving field, little scholarly attention has been paid to dance or play over the field's history in the years thereafter. Overall, panelists offered a number of compelling possible reasons for this lack of attention. One panelist believed that the choice of the name "sport management" within the NASSM moniker served to influence the perceived jurisdiction of the field: "Obviously the choice of the original name led people to think that the managerial aspects of exercise, play, and dance were not to be included."

Other panelists felt that the less obvious management implications for dance and play have made them difficult domains to "manage" and therefore less relevant to what sport managers concern themselves with:

> The NASSM Constitution clearly [laid] out our domains of purview although we might not have addressed all areas as dance for example. If one were to study the management or marketing of dance studios, it would be under the purview of sport management.
>
> I believe that both of these terms certainly deal with movement, but not in the sense of their 'management' from a sport perspective. This is still open to debate however.

Still, a few panelists offered the explanation that the pre-existence of other professional organizations, as well as the particular interests of those entering sport management, have dissuaded scholarly attention toward dance and play:

> Perhaps because NIRSA, AAHPERD are better forums. However, if a well written scholarly article on the governance of play or dance associations was submitted to JSM, I'm sure it would be considered.

> Most of people involved at that time -- and after -- focused on college athletics, college recreation, or pro sport. There were not many interested in the management aspects of dance and the growing leisure/recreation journals & conferences attracted the folks interested in leisure/rec[reation].
>
> A personal opinion: I feel that many of faculty members, and students, felt that "pro" and "college sport" was their primary interest and focus. As an outcome there tended to be a very heavy focus on "marketing and advertising" aspects of the field. This may have led to a downplay of management skills for people who had interests in running fitness and exercise businesses. In the case of dance, historically dance people felt that they were getting a bad deal within physical education/sport units, the "poor second cousin" so to speak. Now dance people often find more comfort within performing arts, or even music faculties, as has just been the case at [my university]. Here…there is no longer any dance offered, and very few sport activities. These areas are often left to Education/Physical Educ. Programs.

Finally, one panelist provided an explanation suggesting that the shifting academic backgrounds of graduate students choosing to study sport management altered the appreciation for these domains as important areas for management:

> Doctoral students are no longer coming from PE undergraduate or master's programs, so they have no educational background in dance or play. This is the logical result of creating sport management curricula that are different from PE curricula. Consequently, today's young faculty members have neither the knowledge nor the desire to pay scholarly attention to dance or play. Personally, I do not see dance or play as part of sport management from a scholarship perspective. Both of those fields have their own bodies of knowledge. They also have scholarly associations where academics can share their research and perspectives…

Although a number of different ideas and perspectives can be gleaned from the responses of the founders to the general prompts utilized in this study, they all coalesce in a manner that explains the narrowing of sport management from its laissez faire, broadly defined initial scope to its relative emphasis on commercialized, entertainment sport. The efforts of the founders sought to establish a unique discipline and to let the interests of the membership guide NASSM's proverbial compass prevailed, even if those interests led the organization away from the initial vision of some of the panelists in this study.

DISCUSSION

In the span of roughly 25 years, the foci of NASSM have narrowed from the initially inclusive scope captured in Zeigler's suggestion to name the organization the North American Society for Sport and Physical Activity Management to one in which the study of entertainment-based commercial sport predominates. A simple explanation for this narrowing could be that the original interests and actions of the organization, in spite of officially naming the study of sport, exercise, dance, and play as realms of inquiry for sport management, never approximated this lofty ideal. The ambivalence expressed by many of the panelists -- the very founders of NASSM -- about the place of particularly the less structured realms of dance and play, indicates that the lip service paid to the management of these other forms of physical activity throughout the organization's history may be just that: lip service (recall that the NASSM statement of purpose remains virtually unchanged today).

On the other hand, such an explanation fails to account for the influence of a complex mixture of environmental forces enveloping the birth and growth of NASSM as a scholarly vehicle. As the responses of the panel of founders indicate, the development of this organization has passed through a number of important phases driven by factors both extrinsic and intrinsic to the founders themselves. At first, the organization sought to create an inclusive home for the growing number of scholars concerned with the management of physical activity in its many sectors. This inclusivity, however, could not be mistaken as redundancy; while broadly defining the field, the founders needed to also establish the uniqueness and legitimacy of sport and physical activity management. In addition to showcasing what NASSM was to be, the founders also had to differentiate the organization from AAHPERD, CAHPER, SMARTS, USSA, and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (the process of which itself could merit a

separate article). With the pre-existence of so many overlapping organizations, NASSM's metaphorical slice of the sport and physical activity pie started out much smaller than its constitution envisioned. This reality was especially true if NASSM was to develop a basis in management without eschewing its roots in physical education. As Zeigler wrote in a letter to Parks,

> One point really has me both puzzled and concerned. This is how we can capture the interest of both those people who are interested in management theory and those who are primarily concerned with physical education and athletics administration. I feel this is an extremely important issue because, if either amorphous group senses that it is unwanted or can't see the sense in becoming involved, it could (in my opinion) spoil the whole undertaking to a great degree. (Zeigler, Letter, August 8, 1985)

Combined with the aforementioned concerns Zeigler expresses in this same letter about excluding the term "physical education" from the title of the organization, the emphasis on the sport domain within the organization was seen as a means for NASSM to position itself competitively within the market of related domains and organizations. In this sense, the disregard for developing the non-sport realms of the field derived, at least in part, from the need to cultivate a sustainable niche in an academic landscape already comprised of more established societies concerned with physical education, recreation, dance, and leisure.

An understanding of how market forces driving the positioning of NASSM at both its onset and over the decades can be informed, at least indirectly, by a previous study examining the struggles of a modified youth sport program attempting to avoid conforming to adopt elements of traditional youth sport programs. In their assessment of the challenges associated with establishing and maintaining modified youth sport programs, Chalip and Green (1998) found that the biggest obstacle to sustaining a modified youth sport program was that it was so different from traditional sport programs

-- not that it was ineffective in delivering positive outcomes and experiences for its child participants. Utilizing Hotelling's (1929) location game, Chalip and Green described how the cultural space exerted pressure from opposite sides of the sport spectrum (i.e., hypercompetitive on one side and playful, non-competitive on the other) to conform to a more traditional, centrist sport program. Rather than establish themselves at various points along the programming spectrum in order to cultivate particular market niches, youth sport programs often counterintuitively cluster toward the center of the spectrum in order to, in theory, draw from the broadest market.

While sport management encompasses much more than youth sport programming, the point in drawing the analog to Chalip and Green's (1998) study is to consider the issues facing the founders of sport management at the time of its founding related to positioning the field (and NASSM) within an established marketplace. Although Hotelling's (1929) framework initially related to the physical positioning of businesses, it also functions as a heuristic to consider the psychological positioning of a business or product within a marketplace. Given the pre-existence of organizations such as AAHPERD and CAHPER, which already occupied places at the physical education, exercise, dance, and play locations along the spectrum, establishing a strong tie to commercial, spectator sport may have seemed (to the founders) to provide the optimal means of establishing a sustainable niche. The attractiveness of this niche was undoubtedly strengthened by the ubiquity of spectator sport both within the mass media and as iconic imagery for the cultural significance of sport on the whole. In other words, spectator sport held a dominant place in the psychological positioning of the study of sport, both then and now.

To posit that the only reason sport management cultivated such a narrow purview was to presciently position itself to survive in the market risks conflating means and ends.

The panel also alluded to a general lack of interest by both NASSM members and sport management students in most physical activity beyond commercial sport as a driving force behind the narrowing of the field from its original vision. In lamenting the lack of attention paid to recreational sport, dance, and play, one of the panelists deemed this preoccupation with entertainment-based sport "spectatoritis." Panelists offer a range of potential explanations for this phenomenon: the previously mentioned existence of academic vehicles for the study of more playful forms of sport and physical activity, the perpetuation of the interest in professional and college sport by the majority of scholars entering sport management at its early stages, or the absence of a background in the theoretical conceptions of play and human movement for most graduate students studying sport management. While each of these explanations has validity, none offers an explanation as to why so many sport management scholars and students cultivate a more exclusive interest in the business interests of the field. Implicit in the treatment of the realms of dance and play throughout the organization's history is the notion that through focusing on the management of professional and college sport instead of recreational sport, dance, and play, the field could be perceived as more legitimate by aligning its focus on the "serious" aspects of sport. This emphasis also distances sport management from the stigmatized playful aspects of sport and physical activity, which are often thought to be frivolous and inconsequential.

Sport management has cultivated a place for itself within the academic study of sport that has positioned the field far from the other (playful) forms of physical activity included in the organization's initial vision (i.e., exercise, dance, and play). The disconnect from these other realms throughout the organization's history is, at first glance, startling. Upon deeper inspection, however, the driving forces behind the narrowing of sport management become clearer. In spite of NASSM's meteoric growth

over the past 25 years, there are many within the organization, including some of its founders, who express dismay at the seemingly singular emphasis on such a narrow portion of the overall sport and physical activity spectrum. For these individuals, NASSM's emphasis on professional and major college sport is overshadowing the type of sport and physical activity management that is capable of improving the lives of all populations, as evidenced in this recent letter from Earle Zeigler to then-NASSM President James Zhang:

> …some of us who put together the original constitution and ethical orientation dreamed that NASSM would indeed be 'two-headed' or 'two-armed', so to speak. The one 'head' (public-sector and commercialized sport management is 'proceeding like gangbusters' within NASSM (and in the real world!) with here and there, often futile efforts, to rein it in because of excesses. NASSM's development that is being copied worldwide is good, and it is gathering potency gradually. The other 'head' (i.e., management of sport and physical activity of all types for normal and special populations) seems barely recognizable within NASSM – and thus administrative theory and practice that was growing within physical education/kinesiology in educational circles seems to have vanished because the faculty 'horsepower' has shifted to NASSM orientation and emphasis. Am I wrong? (Zeigler, Letter, December 14, 2010)

CONCLUSION

Zeigler is not wrong. In many ways, the history of the North American Society of Sport Management suggests that, at best, non-commercial sports contexts have held an ambiguous place within the field. The present study draws from the historical record and the perspectives of the NASSM's founders to elucidate the causes underlying the emphasis on such a small portion of the scope initially envisioned for the organization. The intent of this study has not been to cast stones or point fingers regarding the lack of attention given to, in particular, the more playful forms of sport and physical activity. The reasons for the narrowing of the organization's scope have both a market-driven and cultural basis. Although the status quo has rendered a relatively homogenous

interpretation of sport, understanding contexts has undoubtedly played a significant role for the founders of the organization. The perceived prestige and cultural value derived from NASSM's historic emphasis on commercial sport contexts provided a natural dissociation from the lower-status physical education and recreation contexts from which many of the founders emerged. In this regard, focusing efforts on more professionalized sport contexts was perceived to offer sport management the legitimacy that the founders believed it needed in order to survive as a field. However, if the misgivings of some of the forbearers of NASSM are to be heeded, and greater effort made to manage sport and physical activity in order to benefit non-elite, non-commercial contexts as well, then an understanding of the roots of the disconnect between sport management and these other contexts is instructive. Like any social phenomena, gaining an understanding of the historical scope of sport management surely benefits those individuals charged with shaping its future course.

Chapter 3: Reconstructing the Youth Sport Experience: How Children Derive Meaning from Unstructured and Organized Settings

As I sat and observed the boys run, wrestle, and scream their way across the playground, picnic tables, and basketball court, two cars pulled up in the otherwise vacant parking lot. Out of the first stepped a middle-aged, athletic-looking African-American man carrying an unzipped duffle bag with small orange cones and two footballs poking out of it. From the passenger side of the other car (a BMW SUV), a gawky, 14/15 year old white teenager emerged wearing Nike dri-fit from head-to-toe and shiny new Nike cleats. The man and the teenager briefly shook hands before making their way through the anarchic, cacophonous madness of the boys running virtual circles around them like they weren't even there. About a minute behind, the mother of the teenager scurried through their wake to take her place watching the teenager follow the warm-up instructions of the man on the field adjacent to the playground. This is one of the more defining moments of my months spent exploring youth sports in the community: a literal juxtaposition of the transition that these boys are likely to undergo in the next 2-3 years. On the playground, the boys play without supervision, their initial focus (playing pickup basketball) long abandoned for the opportunity to run and scream without purpose. Fifty yards away, the teenager practices running route trees as the man throws him passes, all while instructing him on the nuances of planting his feet and turning his hips. There is no joy, no real rapport: this is work, a business transaction. I approach the mother and ask her about her son. She says that he wants to make varsity next year as a freshman so that he can have a greater chance for exposure to college scouts over a longer period of time. Hard to argue with that logic these days. The man, she says, used to be a high school coach at one of the high schools in the district, but now just does personal training. I thank her for her time and head back over to the playground area where David is fighting back tears after Wyatt threw a wayward traffic cone (presumably left by a school official after Friday afternoon pickup) at his hand. I cannot help but note another odd juxtaposition in the use of the cones between the boys and the adjacent training session - one for play and many for work. I ask the boys what they think about the teenager and the trainer - they hadn't noticed them. Somewhat astonished, I pressed further. Yes, they acknowledged, they can see them, but they didn't notice them until I brought it up. Does that speak to the all-encompassing nature of their play or the mundanity of this presence? How do they traverse these two worlds? (Field Notes, 10 September 2010)

Although the boys described in the preceding field notes may have been so engulfed in their play that they failed to notice the teenager working toward a college scholarship on the next field over, the same cannot be said for most sport researchers. In fact, the academic study of youth sport has dedicated considerable energy to understanding the teenage boy working in a structured, organized sport environment to achieve an elite outcome (e.g., Helsen, Starkes, & Hodges, 1998). These efforts of sport managers to understand elite athlete performance have been driven in large part by the emergence of the study of sport development, which endeavors to understand and evaluate the programs and systems used to recruit, retain, and advance athletes to the highest levels of performance. As the study of organized youth sport has become more elaborated over time, both within sport development and more broadly sport management, researchers have generally failed to "notice" the boys (and girls) playing in the unstructured settings. The singular focus on understanding the outcomes of organized sport participation is not surprising, however, as it mirrors the overall societal shift toward valuing sport -- particularly youth sport -- for the outcomes it can produce (cf. Ogden, 2002). Unstructured sport settings, on the other hand, are often characterized as play, and therefore are perceived to offer little opportunity for the types of extrinsic outcomes that are socially valued, such as winning, earning college scholarships, and ascending to the professional ranks (cf. Kohn, 1992). This emphasis on organized sport and consequent de-emphasis of sport played in unstructured settings is problematic for scholars and practitioners interested in advancing the field of sport development to produce both better athletes and better people.

First, the emphasis on organized sports paints an incomplete picture of the lived experiences of youth sport participants. Although it may be useful in an academic exercise to taxonomically differentiate sport participation into categories and then focus

empirical inquiry on the setting that is perceived to be more salient for certain goals, organized sport is only one component of a child's overall youth sport experience. To assess a child's sport participation through only studying those sports played in an organized setting is like trying to measure a child's intellect solely through performance on a standardized test: it may produce inaccurate assessments and undervalue the overall capacity of education -- or in this case, sport. Understanding a child's youth sport experience without considering what he or she does in an unsupervised, unstructured setting has the potential to overlook important experiences and developmental processes that occur outside of an organized setting. Moreover, to homogenize the youth sport experience as simply organized sport ultimately devalues the important role of play in the overall development of children (e.g., Frost, Wortham, & Reifel, 2008).

Second, research highlighting the purported outcomes of sport participation without consideration of the meaningfulness of the actual experience of participating creates an axiological orientation where the outcome of participating in youth sport is valued over the experience. To revisit the analogy drawn from the field notes, in the current youth sport literature a college scholarship is implicitly perceived as intrinsically more valuable than an afternoon of play. Yet, Chalip et al. (1984) assert that understanding the experiences of playing sports themselves may prove to be as important as the long-term developmental impact: "From the point of view of significance to a person's development, it might be argued that the sum of discrete, immediate experiences is as important, or more so, than the long-term 'effects'" (p. 109). In other words, the experiences associated with playing youth sports (in any setting) may provide a critical understanding of a child's overall youth sport participation that is not captured in an *ex post facto* measurement of an outcome. The experiences of playing sport in different settings themselves have the potential to impact the meaning of playing sports for that

child, which may have a greater influence on what he or she derives from sport in a more holistic sense.

In this regard, contemporary research on youth sports has yet to consider how the experiences associated with participating in sport across multiple settings impacts the overall meaning of playing sports for children. To this point, the major contributions in the literature examine the impact of critical shifts in the nature of children's sport participation on their psychological well-being and their development as athletes in an organized sport setting. Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin (2005), for example, investigate at what age it is developmentally appropriate for children to shift from playing a diverse range of sports to specializing in the particular sport they aim to pursue at the highest level. Helsen et al. (1998), on the other hand, examine the influence of time spent in deliberate play versus deliberate practice in predicting athletic outcomes for young athletes playing organized sport. In both cases, and in virtually all of the studies related to youth sport, the implicit goal of the research is to ascertain how best to initiate and sustain a child's participation in organized sport. As a result of the emphasis on understanding the outcomes of organized youth sports, sport researchers overlook the positive experiences fostered in less structured settings such as pickup sports and neighborhood play, in turn creating a monolithic representation of youth sports that belies the experiential diversity of sport for children in a broad range of settings.

Nearly three decades ago, Chalip, et al. (1984) concluded in their aforementioned study related to variations in formal and informal sport experiences that "sport participation cannot be discussed in the simple good-versus-bad terms which have characterized much of the youth sport debate" (p. 15). Yet, broad generalizations are precisely how sport continues to be conceptualized. Green (2008) notes that "sport has been treated as if it were a unitary experience. That is, all sport is seen as the same; it is

assumed to provide the same benefits to all participants no matter the program or context" (p. 138). While the majority of research on the outcomes of youth and adolescent sport participation has focused on either its potential long-term developmental benefits (e.g., Kavussanu & Ntoumanis, 2003) or its ability to predict future levels of physical activity (e.g., Perkins et al., 2004), few empirical accounts have examined the sport experience beyond an organized sport context. Moreover, fewer accounts have considered how participating in organized sports *and* playing informal sports complement one another in contributing to the meaning of a child's overall experience of playing sports. From a sport development standpoint, articulating a more complete understanding of how the experience of playing sports across different settings influences child participants can inform both systemic efforts to recruit, retain, and advance children through sport development systems and program-level efforts to facilitate the positive aspects that children can derive from sport participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As Green (2005) notes, the theoretical basis for sport development research derives from the dual need of sport managers to cultivate elite athletes for international competition and to encourage mass rates of sport participation. While these two enterprises reflect fundamentally different pursuits, they become intertwined through the need of elite sport to draw from a mass pool of sport participants in order to find those relatively few athletes capable of high performance (Bowers, Chalip, & Green, 2010b). In Green's (2005) pyramid model of youth sport development, therefore, the relatively few high-performing elite athletes are supported by a broad participation base from which they ascend. In the opening field notes, the teenager training on the adjacent field could

be thought of as one of these high-performing athletes, while the boys playing next to him are the broad participation base from which he emerged.

An emerging concern in sport development research is to understand the social and political origins for sport systems that emphasize a singular focus on organized sport while rejecting more playful sport forms (cf. Bowers & Hunt, 2011). Guttman (1988) identifies the genesis for the dichotomizing of organized sport and informal play as an outgrowth of the mid-twentieth century advent of adult-organized youth sport leagues and the subsequent movement away from the predominantly child-led informal sport experiences of previous eras. This shift in the nature of children's sport participation also reflected an ontological shift in the history of children's play, and served as the basis for what has developed into the modern form of youth sport. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, sport scholars began to consider the impact of this movement toward organized sport on the nature of the experience for the child/adolescent participant, and consequently began to frame the discussion in terms of organized settings *versus* unstructured settings. Devereux (1976), for example, provides one of the most enduring analyses on the sociocultural repercussions of Little League supplanting backyard baseball as a child's primary sport experience: "Almost all of the opportunities for incidental learning which occur in spontaneous, self-organized children's games have somehow been sacrificed at the alter of safety (physical only) and competence (in baseball only)" (p. 69). Following this rumination on the direction of the sport experience for children, other scholars began to demonstrate that organized sport may not be as beneficial an experience for children in terms of building character (Kleiber & Roberts, 1981) and fostering upward social mobility (Watson, 1977), for example, as was traditionally thought.

Recently, however, a few sport scholars acknowledged that organized sport ought to be merely one component of an increasingly incomplete sport participation spectrum. In his indictment over the field of sport management's emphasis on elite development through an organized sport context, Zeigler (2007) wondered, "Where is the evidence that organized sport's goal is based on tenable theory consonant with societal values that claim to promote the welfare of all?" (p. 298). Green (2008) similarly challenges sport managers to take a more proactive, participant-centered approach to the design and implementation of programs in multiple contexts, and cautions that a laissez-faire approach reliant on organized sport alone may produce unforeseen (or incompatible) outcomes. Yet, in spite of the importance of understanding the experiences occurring within multiple sport participation contexts, perceived challenges to the dominance of organized sport -- like those offered by modified sport programs attempting to provide an experiential compromise between organized and informal sports -- are often met with skepticism about their legitimacy (Green, 1997). In the rare instances that modified or informal sports are played, they often face intense social pressure to conform to the more pervasive model of traditional organized sport (e.g., Chalip & Green, 1998). While the efforts of a small percentage of researchers and practitioners suggest incremental progress in considering the sport experience as the sum of participation in a variety of contexts, the vast majority of researchers and practitioners still adhere to a more dichotomous view of playing sport in organized *versus* unstructured settings.

It was over twenty-five years ago that Chalip et al. (1984) lamented the fact that "very little systematic investigation has been devoted to the immediate experiences provided by sports" (p. 109). Despite the exhortation to develop a more nuanced understanding of the experiences fostered in organized and informal sport, the ensuing decades witnessed relatively little progress in understanding the overall experience of

participating in sport. Moreover, of the paltry number of studies that even allude to understanding the influence of participative context on the sport experience, none considers the epistemological synthesis that emerges from participation in multiple settings. In each case, researchers position participation in organized and unstructured settings as discrete and distinct processes. In fact, most studies only indirectly refer to an element of this debate, such as the impact of internal and/or external motivation on participation in organized or recreational sport; as in Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, and Grouios's (2002) examination of constraints to participation for 257 adult recreational sport participants in Greece, or Curtis, McTeer, and White's (1999) finding that participation in competitive organized sport as a child predicted participation in a competitive context for a representative sample of Canadian adults.

In terms of youth-related research on sport context, Recours, Souville, and Griffet (2004) examined 878 French secondary school students about the motivations driving their sport participation and found that females were motivated more by sociability while males were motivated by competition and exhibitionism. Perhaps correspondingly, females also preferred an informal sport context, while males reported a higher preference for formal sport contexts.

In another French study of 728 teenagers, Waser and Passavant (1997) found that differences existed in the likelihood of participating in formal versus informal sports depending on the gender, as well as the socioeconomic status, of the respondent. In this case, females were curiously more likely to participate in a formal setting because of a lack of structured social opportunities accompanying informal sport, while respondents of lower socioeconomic status were more likely to participate in an unstructured sport setting because of the financial constraints of organized sport participation.

In one of the few U.S.-based studies found throughout the leisure, sociology, and sport management literature, Knoppers, Zuidema, and Meyer (1989) asserted the importance of understanding the differences in the experiences of playing in different sport contexts. In their analysis of 312 Midwestern sport summer camp attendees, the researchers indicated that participants valued competitiveness and winning in both organized and unstructured settings, although reported much higher levels in organized settings. The authors suggest that "perhaps, then, the term 'professionalization of attitudes' should be rephrased to 'professionalization of situations'" (p. 75). Somewhat similarly, Ogden (2002) presented a qualitative analysis describing how youth baseball players in the Midwest have increasingly shifted their sporting experiences from the unstructured, "pickup" settings toward organized sport in order to pursue elite development during their increasingly limited leisure time. Like Devereux (1976) before him, Ogden is concerned about the detrimental impact that this shift might have on the development of critical interpersonal and social skills that are better fostered within the informal sport context. The underlying epistemological shortcoming in each of these few studies on the experiences of multi-setting sport participation, however, is the emphasis on differentiating one setting from another rather than seeking to understand what emerges from a child- or athlete-centered consideration of how the experience of participation across different settings contributes to the overall meaning derived from sport participation.

The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning of playing sports as it is experienced by pre-teen boys in a "sport-centric" community. Through understanding the meaning of playing sport for these boys, this research can make two significant contributions to extending the current youth sport development literature. First, this study reasserts the importance of the unstructured sport setting as a meaningful context that

impacts both the child himself (or herself) and the child's participation in organized sport. As a result of this assertion, considering organized sport in isolation risks creating an inaccurate understanding of sport in the lives of its youth participants. Second, by situating the experiences of the child as the focal point for understanding youth sport participation, the process of playing sports is positioned as an equally important component of the sport delivery equation. In this regard, the experiences of playing sports are posited to be as important as the outcomes which derive from participation.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Prior to presenting the protocol and findings of the study, however, it is important to introduce the community where this research was conducted, as the community itself is a significant piece of the empirical puzzle being assembled in this article. "Riggins" (a pseudonym) is a predominantly white, upper-middle class suburb in a major central Texas metropolitan area where sports -- most notably football -- are the lifeblood that both reflects and reinforces the core values of the community. Although the vitriol and fervor surrounding sports in Riggins does not quite approach the levels of Dillon, the fictitious town depicted in the acclaimed television series *Friday Night Lights*, the role of high school football as the unifying agent of the community is nevertheless palpable. The eight-campus, 7,000-student school district hardly approximates the cultural images of small-town Texas high school football that have been depicted in the media; the fact that the lone high school in the district has won four state championships in a row and produced numerous high-profile, Division-I student athletes, however, speaks to the "sport-centric" character of the community. This type of sustained excellence on the community's athletic fields has a discernible impact on the types of financial and temporal resources dedicated to building and sustaining its youth sport programs. It is

difficult to determine whether the success of the high school has filtered down to the youth sport association, or the success of the youth sport association has driven the success of the high school -- likely a combination of the two -- but the importance placed on sporting excellence in this community is without question.

As a result, children in this community are provided virtually every resource and opportunity to succeed as athletes. Where most boys and girls rely on municipal parks and recreation programs to serve as sport providers, the townspeople of Riggins created a private youth sport organization that oversees the administration and funding of nine different sports serving over 4,500 children. Through the work of the executive council and the commissioners of each sport, the organization has also constructed athletic facilities that teams may use for both practice and games. The implicit and explicit emphases placed on sporting success within Riggins may inherently change the meanings of the experiences for children participating in youth sports. In fact, the sport culture of the community, perhaps more than any other single factor, influences the nature of the lived experiences of these children. Unlike at-risk populations living in impoverished, under-resourced communities that often act as a ball-and-chain -- a burden they must carry and ultimately overcome if they are to "succeed" in the conventional sense -- the boys in Riggins start their lives with more than many ever achieve: they utilize top-end, association-owned sports complexes for practices and games; they play in uniforms and with equipment made of a professional grade; and, they have coaches and parents willing to dedicate any amount of time and money to see them achieve success. As a result of their surroundings, however, these boys must overcome a different type of environmental byproduct: expectations. In communities where affluence is more common than poverty, the needs of members shift in Malsow-ian (1954) terms.

In the months prior to the formulation of this study, one of the parents involved in the Riggins Youth Association (RYA) began feeling concerned about what he viewed as an increasing over-emphasis on structure, winning, and success for children participating in youth sports in the community. With three sons all participating in various sports offered by RYA, this parent -- himself a baseball coach and executive board member -- wanted to work on developing more opportunities for the children to play in a less structured environment. He remembered the lessons he learned as a child through playing informal sports in the neighborhood and wanted to see his children (and their friends) have an opportunity for more unstructured free play. As both a coach and a parent of multiple children in the organization, he worried that the demands associated with playing organized sport were undermining the development of a general love of outdoor physical activity. Working with RYA, this parent developed what became known as "Sandlot Nights," which were evenings when RYA would open up the facilities so that parents could drop off their children to play informal sports using the organization's fields and equipment with minimal adult interference. A critic might question whether having to structure an activity where children could play in an unstructured environment defeated the fundamental purposelessness of play. This parent, however, knew the other parents and adults in RYA well enough to understand that this type of organization-wide event was integral to broaching the issue of diminishing play and to facilitating its reintroduction into these children's lives. The amount of scheduled, structured activity was so pervasive, in fact, that he believed the only means of helping parents connect with the need for their children to play was to find a place for it in their schedules.

In practice, these events were never quite as free from adult intervention as play theorists and developmental psychologists might hope them to be (e.g., Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978), but the realization of the overall concept of letting kids play for the

sake of playing was incontrovertible. On average, the "Sandlot Nights" took place once every few weeks from June until September, and drew anywhere from 60 to 100 participants. With the start of youth football in September, however, the "Sandlot Nights" lost their momentum and fell off the RYA calendar because of both a lack of available field space and the shift in time and interest to playing organized football for most families. In spite of this shift away from the "Sandlot Nights," many of the children (even those playing organized football) continued to make time and space for regular informal sport participation.

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

In adopting an integrative view of the experiences of playing sports in multiple settings for pre-teen boys in this community, the boys' construction of meaning is explored through the lens of phenomenology. As van Manen (1990) asserts, phenomenology is the study of the individual's life-world, as experienced rather than as conceptualized, categorized, or theorized. Phenomenology aims for a deeper understanding of the meaning of everyday experience that, as Heidegger (1962) posits, exists in the transaction between an individual and a situation so that the individual both constitutes and is constituted by the situation.

The present analysis derives from the phenomenological study of the meaning of playing sports as it is experienced by ten of these pre-teen boys living in the community of Riggins, each of whom regularly continued to play informal sports in addition to organized sports. Through its focus on the meaning of lived experience, phenomenology views the body as the channel through which individuals interpret and understand the world in which they live (Husserl, 1970; van Manen, 1990). As the body interacts with the world, the mind interprets and provides meaning for every situation that it encounters

(Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). These experiences (and their subsequent interpretation and meaning) are what then allow individuals to comprehend their own existence (Heidegger, 1962). In service to the objective of the present research, phenomenology facilitates an immersive understanding of participant experiences in a manner that generates a "thick description" of the life-worlds of the participants (cf. Geertz, 1973).

In terms of facilitating an understanding of the lived experiences of children's sport participation and play, phenomenology serves to "transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence -- in such a way that the effect of the text is at once reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful" in the lives of these boys (van Manen, 1990, p. 36). For example, the simple act of playing backyard football with other children from the neighborhood has no real purpose outside of the physical act itself. Since it has no intrinsic meaning or purpose, "the quality of space, mood, and shared world" become what the boys associate with the experience of "playing football in the backyard" (p. 37). The choosing of teams, the tears shed over a skinned knee, the arguments over whether the ball crossed the goal-line before a player was tackled: each of these experiences combines to create a shared world that these boys inhabit. The meanings of these physical experiences of play, however, do not develop in the mind of the child until they are recounted on the playground the next day or debated at the sleepover later that evening. In reflecting on "playing football in the backyard," the lived experience takes on its own atmosphere and tone. The conversations in this space become conversations different from those had at the family dinner table or in an organized sport setting; the feel of being tackled by bare arms and shoulders feels distinct from being tackled in full pads. There becomes a unity to the experience of "playing football in the backyard" -- saying they are "going to play football in the backyard" conjures up a unique essence that is different from anything else they may do. As

Merleau-Ponty (1962) notes, phenomenology is the study of this essence. It is the type of science that gives reflective expression to the quotidian; everyday experiences become meaningful and interpretable as we give memory to them by talking and thinking about them. In this regard, phenomenology offers a powerful ontological framework for understanding the experience of playing sports for the boys in this community that captures the essence of what it means to play in this "shared world."

Data Collection

In accordance with phenomenological research, data collection proceeded in a manner that "creates a multilayered text about the meaning of the human experiences under inquiry" (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000, p. 58). The genesis of this "text" emerged from the synthesis of "interactive" interviews aimed at eliciting "narrative texts" from the participant and naturalistic and participant-observer field notes designed to yield a "field text" from the researcher (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). Given the intensive level of immersion required of the researcher, phenomenologists consider a sample size of 6-9 participants to be sufficient, depending on the quality of data obtained from each participant (Morse, 1994). In this study, ten pre-teen boys from Riggins comprised the sample, with participant recruitment facilitated through the aforementioned parent/coach/board member who originally set out to organize the "Sandlot Nights" (see Table 2). Given the importance of understanding the meanings of the experiences for the participants, this particular study restricted its analytic purview to boys. While there are undoubtedly meaningful differences between the experiences of boys and girls at this age (as with other ages, ethnicities, and abilities), it is important to adequately investigate each segment in sufficient depth to produce valuable insights, rather than providing a superficial understanding of a broader participant range.

Table 2: Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Organized Sports	Age
David	Baseball, Basketball, Football, Lacrosse	11
Wyatt	Baseball, Football, Lacrosse	12 (turned 13)
Nate	Lacrosse, Football	11
Matthew	Baseball, Basketball, Football, Wrestling	12
Christian	Baseball, Basketball, Football, Wrestling	12
Cooper	Baseball, Football	11
Darren	Baseball, Football	11 (turned 12)
Steven	Baseball, Basketball, Lacrosse, Football	11
Patrick	Baseball, Basketball, Football	12 (turned 13)
Kurt	Baseball, Dirt Bike, Football	12

Due to the sensitive nature of working with children, the study underwent meticulous human subjects IRB approval that required both the assent of the child participants and the consent of their parents. In spite of the difficulty associated with conducting research on children or adolescents (versus an adult sample), it was essential to our understanding of the lived experience of playing sports for these sixth and seventh grade boys (ages 11-12) because as Sarason (1972) quips, "You can learn things about childhood from working with adults, but there is more to childhood than that" (p. 277). Drawing from over ten years of experience coaching and working with children (ranging in age from six to 17), the researcher worked to minimize potential age and status barriers between himself and the boys. Still, eliciting responses from pre-teen boys offers significant challenges, which were navigated through interpersonal approaches centered on actively participating with the boys in games of catch, for example, during interviews and focusing on having the boys tell stories instead of answer questions. Working with such an a-reflective population afforded both challenges and opportunities, as captured in the following entry from the researcher's personal reflective journal:

> One of the explicit goals of phenomenology is to identify and capture pre-reflective thought. In essence, to depict experiences (and their derived meanings) simply as they are. One of the challenges of working with sixth and seventh grade boys is that they do not convey much, if any, reflection about their experiences. They will happily answer questions and do their best to recount experiences, but it is obvious that they have not spent any time thinking about the experiences that they are sharing with me. If I were employing a different methodological framework for this study, I would be in trouble. Because I am utilizing phenomenology, however, the lack of reflection is, in some ways, ideal. It is almost as if the periods of play are enjoyed for their relative meaninglessness compared to every other aspect of their lives. For these boys, the actual act of playing is closer to a stream of consciousness than it is a measured or considered behavior. This freedom stands in stark contrast to virtually every other activity in their lives at this particular stage. (Reflective Journal entry, 13 August 2010)

In order to elicit a more contemporaneous narrative from these participants, the research adopted a longitudinal, prospective approach whereby the researcher conducted "close observation" (van Manen, 1990) of participant experiences in both organized and informal sports contexts and conducted semi-structured, conversational interviews about their experiences in these different settings (cf. Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000; see Appendix C for sample initial interview questions). Each of the interviews was recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed for analysis. In addition to close observation and interactive interviews during the ongoing "Sandlot Nights," the researcher also observed and interviewed the participants before and after participation in organized league games.

Overall, the period of data collection lasted approximately 11 months. Close observation and interactive interviews served as the primary means of data collection, but participants also wrote a reflective written account of the experiences in each participative context that represent their favorite and least favorite memories of playing sports in unstructured and organized settings (see Figure 1; cf. Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Additionally, throughout the duration of the project, the researcher maintained a personal

reflective journal in order to provide a forum for the subjective consideration of his thoughts, emotions, and ideas related to the research experience. This journal served as a personal sounding board in the process of making sense of the experiences and meanings of the participants. In this regard, the reflective journal assisted the researcher in working to bracket his inherent personal biases developed over two decades of experience playing and working in youth sport, and offered a narrative space for negotiating the natural struggle in qualitative research between subjective and objective interpretation.

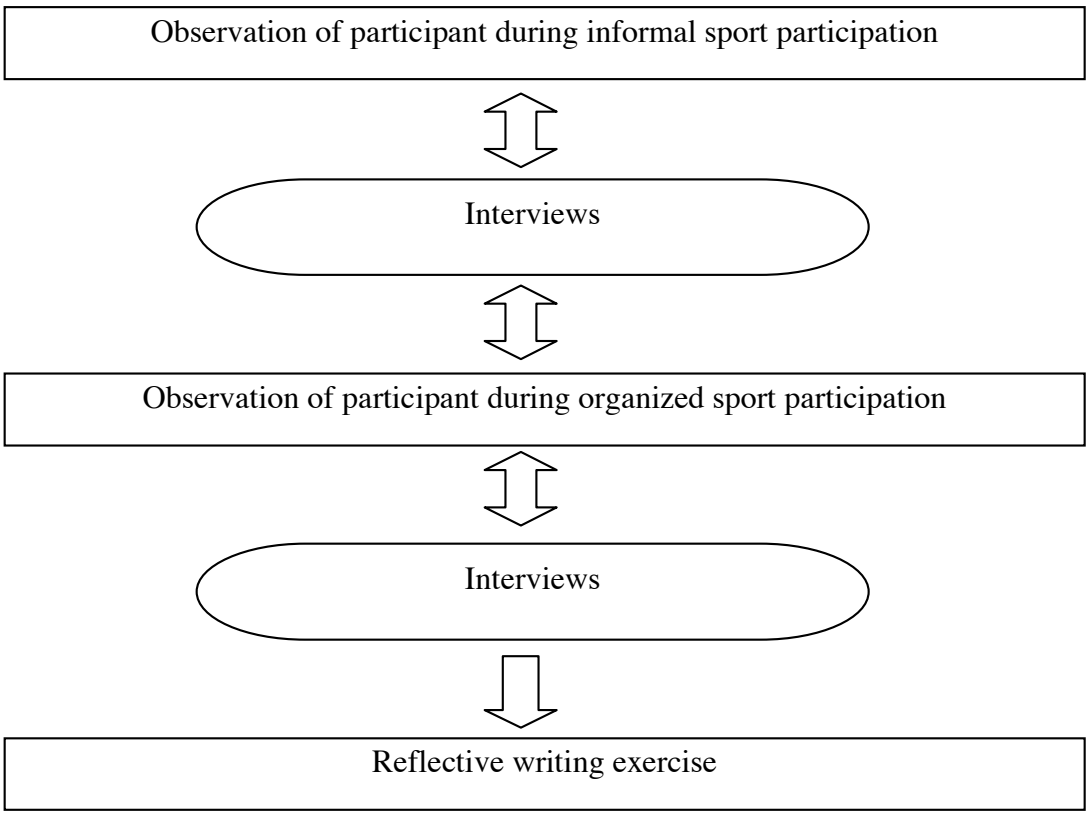

Figure 1: Overview of Data Collection Methods

During the initial months of the data collection, the researcher also endeavored to immerse himself in the cultural representations and manifestations of the youth sport

experience, which included watching a range of theatrical and documentary films and reading both fiction and non-fiction literature pertinent to the subject matter. As Munhall (2007) notes, this step is important in order to familiarize oneself with a range of "experiential descriptions of the experience or the meaning of the experience that may have been written from other perspectives" (p. 190). In other words, this process informs the researcher's understanding of the descriptive aspects of a general type of experience. Following the initial (roughly four-month) cultural immersion, the researcher implemented a series of different interview approaches designed to further elaborate on the developing understanding of the meaning of the experience of playing sports for these boys. One approach consisted of conducting three slightly more structured interviews over longer periods (up to 30 minutes) with each participant. These more structured interviews afforded the participants an opportunity to clarify and explain earlier discussion and observations. In addition to the longer, more structured interviews spaced throughout the data collection period, participants also offered smaller interview snippets ranging from three to 15 minutes, and often conducted *in situ* while the researcher and the participant played sports together. A third interview tactic involved conducting periodic group interviews throughout the duration of the study in an attempt to create a more communal group environment that might foster a different type of sharing and reflection. In total, approximately 15-20 interviews (of various lengths) were conducted with each of the participants.

Following the extended close observation and interviews of each participant, participants also composed the aforementioned reflective written accounts of the two experiences in each participative context that represented their favorite and least favorite memories of playing sports in unstructured and organized settings. Given the hermeneutic nature of phenomenology, an opportunity to compose stories about their experiences

provided a type of reflection different from that associated with answering verbal questions (cf. Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Combined, these collective data collection tactics endeavored to provide a range of different opportunities for the participants to consider the meanings of the experience of playing sports. In all, this analysis drew from a broad spectrum of data which included the researcher's personal reflective journal, popular and academic literature, transcribed participant interviews, field notes from close observation of participation, and the boys' written stories about their experiences.

Data Analysis

After constructing the narrative texts from the interviews and reflective written exercises, and the field texts from observations and other contextual fora, the dialectical process known as the hermeneutic circle guided the interpretation of the data (cf. Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). Ostensibly, the hermeneutic circle entails that the smallest data be interpreted in terms of the broadest cultural context, and vice versa. This leads to a cycle of interpretation and refinement that fuels the analytic process and generates a "thick description" of the experiences of the participants based on an immersion into the data.

The specific data analysis steps consisted of six stages. This six-stage approach was adopted from Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) and informed by van Manen (1990), who specifically recommended its use for doctoral students and less-experienced phenomenological researchers because of its clarity as an analytical framework. This six-stage analysis was also employed because it explicitly incorporated the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (2000) designed to promote trustworthiness and authenticity of the data within its framework. These recommendations to promote trustworthiness and authenticity included the researcher maintaining a personal reflective journal (as

mentioned), the creation of an audit trail (including raw data, data reduction products, data reconstruction products, process notes, intention notes, and developmental notes), and consultation with another researcher throughout the research process to confirm the interpretation of the data. Additional trustworthiness derived from the collegial feedback gleaned from the presentation of this analysis at two different academic conferences throughout the duration of the project.

The first stage was "Immersion" and was comprised of organizing the various sources of data into texts, iterative readings of the texts, and the formation of initial interpretations prior to coding. Next, the "Understanding" stage required the delineation of first-order (participant) constructs through inductive, line-by-line in-vivo coding. Although in-vivo coding is often associated more with grounded theory research, its use in phenomenology is advised by both Saldaña (2009) and van Manen (1990) as a means of preserving the voice of the participants. Given the inherent inarticulateness of pre-teen boys, it was important to take measures that grounded the researcher in their voice throughout the process -- in order to both "give voice" to a population that often has little voice in research and to further promote authenticity by helping the researcher resist the temptation to extrapolate beyond the child's words and meanings at this early stage of analysis. Third, the "Abstraction" stage involved the identification of second-order (researcher) constructs derived from the initial inductive coding, followed by the grouping of these constructs into sub-themes based on the four phenomenological life-worlds: corporeality, temporality, spatiality, relationality (cf. Munhall, 2007). At this point, the aggregated in-vivo codes from all of the participants were organized into the four life-worlds based on their reference to the child's experiences within a given space or environment (spatiality), embodied experiences (corporeality), experiences situated in time (temporality), or their intersubjective experiences with others (relationality). During

the fourth stage, "Synthesis and Theme Development," the sub-themes were grouped into themes that were then further elaborated and compared across the sample. Within each of the four life-world groupings, thematic patterns were identified through situating the experiences in the particular life-world. For example, within the spatiality grouping, themes identifying the relationship between the experiences of the boys' kinesthetic movements and the influence of the physical setting of their play emerged as salient. Fifth, in the "Illumination and Illustration of Phenomenon" stage, themes were contextualized within the existing research literature and the interpretations reconstructed into narratives. At this point the meanings of the experiences identified in the earlier stages informed the construction of an original narrative aiming to capture the essence of the lived experience of playing sports for these boys. Finally, the "Integration and Critique" stage enabled the interpretation of the findings and a critique of the themes, particularly with respect to how the findings extend current epistemological understandings of youth sport programming and development.

RESULTS

The findings of this analysis highlight the level of interactivity across organized and unstructured sport settings in the derivation of meaning for youth sport participants in this context. Prior to moving forward, it is important to define the terms that will be used throughout the analysis: "organized setting" refers to a sport settings wherein the environment is structured based on the formal rules and norms of the sport, and where adults assume a primary role in organizing and evaluating the boys' play (e.g., "Little League"); "unstructured settings" refer to environments in which there is little-to-no adult presence and the children determine norms and evaluation of the play (e.g., "sandlot baseball"). Although there certainly exist qualitative differences in the experiences

engendered in organized and unstructured settings, the more salient understanding to emerge from this study for sport development scholars is the extent of psychosocial integration between the different settings in contributing to an overall meaning of sport participation. Rather than producing finite, discrete sport experiences and meanings, participation in organized and unstructured settings actually coalesce to shape the life-world of the participant in a manner that alters the overall meaning of participating in sports for these boys.

In this regard, the interpretive framework of phenomenology offers an important lens to situate how these life-worlds are impacted through playing sports. To reiterate, phenomenologists view the body as the channel through which individuals orient themselves to the world (Husserl, 1970). As the body lives through and interprets experiences, the experiences that produce pleasure naturally become reinforced, while those that produce pain or discomfort are avoided. This process of both positive and negative reinforcement of the sensations associated with play for these boys impacts what they choose to do and how they interpret experiences related to their play and movement. Their bodies, in essence, are their instruments for play, and what guides their play is based on an interpretation of what the body experiences in both organized and unstructured settings.

Unstructured Settings Influence the Lived Experience of Playing Organized Sports

Conducting research in a community that places such symbolic value on both the perceived developmental benefits of youth sport participation and the significance of achieving athletic excellence (particularly in high school football), one expects to find images of youth sport at its worst, with borderline abusive adults forcibly molding children into miniature simulacra of professional athletes. Yet, in spite of the overt

emphasis on athletic success in Riggins, the reality for this group of pre-teen boys often does not match the preconceptions associated with many of the valid criticisms of contemporary youth sport on a nationwide scale, such as the overemphasis on winning, the application of a professional model to children's play, and the cooptation of the experience by adult coaches and parents. What is unique about the meanings of participating in sports for the majority of these boys are the consistently precocious levels of maturity and perspective reflected in their thoughts about sport's overall place in their lives. A significant part of the presumably aberrant levels of maturity and rationality projected by each one of these boys derives from the integration of informal sports experiences within their busy organized sports calendars. The positive repercussions of this integration manifest themselves in three primary, interrelated ways. First, playing in unstructured settings allows the boys to practice moving their bodies in ways that give them greater comfort in the movement required of their bodies in organized settings. Second, gaining better control over the movement of their bodies in an unstructured setting lets the boys enjoy the public performance of these movements. Finally, having total control over the unstructured play environment permits the boys to embrace (instead of resist) the lack of control they experience in organized sport environments.

Playing as Practice

In their own ways, each of the boys consistently highlight that unstructured settings afford them a chance to practice their sport. While such an assertion might seem obvious, there are significant nuances to the experiences of participating in an unstructured setting, particularly with respect to their influence on perceptions of the experience of participating in an organized setting. Specifically, the hours of practice accrued during informal sessions allow them to feel a greater sense of control of their

bodies and movements playing organized sports. For researchers and practitioners concerned with recruiting, retaining, and advancing young athletes through sport development systems, one of the most salient findings to emerge from this research is the evidence that playing sports in an unstructured setting can actually serve as a pathway for some children to transition into organized youth sports. In other words, the experience of playing informal sports in an unstructured setting can actually beget the experience of playing organized sports. In the present study, Nate's experiences provide a useful lens to understand how the experiences inform one another.

At the conclusion of this study, Nate planned to try out for seventh grade football in the Fall. Although a common rite of passage for most boys of his age in Riggins, during the initial months of this study Nate expressed a great deal of ambivalence, if not trepidation, about trying out for football. He felt he was under-prepared physically and lacking the requisite skills to earn a spot on the team, so he planned to simply avoid the process altogether lest he set himself up to be ridiculed. What follows is a statement by Nate during the first interview of the study:

> I don't really play sports much. I always have homework and stuff. Plus, I don't have any brothers or anything. It's just me and my 15 year old sisters, so we don't really do that. I don't have time to play organized sports, and I'm not good enough, so I don't want people to laugh [at me].

What changed over the ensuing months to shift his intention toward trying out? According to Nate and many of the other boys in the study, unstructured settings offer them a forum to hone the skillful movement of their bodies and an opportunity to try different tactics/techniques without fear of repercussion. In the second interview conducted with Nate the next month, he indicated a greater interest in starting to play sports within the psychosocial safety of unstructured settings alongside other children with whom he has an established rapport:

> Nate: After the last [Sandlot Night], I started to want to play more. Before school one day, me and my friend and his little brother and his friend, we decided to play just real quick. Since we were a lot older than them, it was me and his little brother against my friend and his little brother's friend. So it was pretty even.
>
> Researcher: So you evened it out? How did you decide that?
>
> Nate: We just like picked real quick because it was not fair two big guys against two little guys.
>
> Researcher: Yeah, that's definitely true. So this was before school. Were you in your school clothes?
>
> Nate: No.
>
> Researcher: Oh, OK. [laughs] I was gonna say, your mom might not be happy about that!
>
> Nate: And we'd just like kick off, like we'd just drop it and kick it and we'd just tackle each other. But for the little kids it's two-hand touch because they probably can't catch us. And we have to two-hand touch them so we don't hurt them.

Once Nate began to feel more comfortable in his ability to perform the skills required to adequately play the sport relative to his peers, he sought out playing with other friends and classmates of the same age in unstructured settings, as reflected in the excerpt of this interview conducted two months after the experience described in the preceding paragraph:

> I've been calling up my friends to play a lot. And it is real fun because we all know each other and know what to do, so we are just like hitting people. We know when to pass to each other and throw it down field. You do better if you know someone. Because you know if you screw up or anything, they're not going to be mad at you because you're friends.

In short, informal sports provide a different type of setting wherein the boys can explore the boundaries of their bodies and their abilities in a relatively consequence-free psychosocial environment. Informal sports let them be creative and let them take risks so that boys such as Nate learn what they do and do not feel comfortable doing in an organized, evaluated setting. Given his lack of experience playing organized sports, this

process of understanding the limits of his ability permitted Nate to hone his sense of control over his movements on the field. Following the experience of playing frequently in an unstructured setting over a period of months, Nate decided to reconsider playing the organized sports he eschewed at the beginning of the study:

> Nate: I decided I'm gonna try out for seventh grade [football].
>
> Researcher: What changed your mind?
>
> Nate: Well, I've just been playing a lot lately with friends and I like it.
>
> Researcher: How do you feel about trying out?
>
> Nate: I feel ok. I know I'm not that good but they have an A, B, and C team, so I think I can make the B team.
>
> Researcher: If [your friends] make the A team and you don't, will you be upset?
>
> Nate: No, because I wanna get playing time and the B team doesn't have as many kids so I can play more. I need to play to get better if I wanna make the A team later.

This relationship between the development of kinesthetic competence and feelings of control over the skills required to succeed in a given sport indicates that, if either component is missing, then the likelihood of playing organized sport -- and sustaining that participation -- may be more tenuous. In essence, participation hinges on the confluence of these two factors. While there is an intuitive connection between developing skills and developing confidence in one's abilities, what is perhaps less intuitive is that this dual-development seems to be fostered more often in unstructured settings than in organized settings. In organized settings, there are often too many other kids to receive the necessary repetitions to build the skill or confidence that comes with the building of the skill. In addition, the presence of adults in evaluative roles can discourage young athletes from exploring the boundaries of their kinesthetic abilities for

fear of negative repercussions, ultimately undermining the development of a deeper joy of movement. In unstructured settings, however, the fluidity of play and consequence-free environment serve as excellent conductors to facilitate this process. If we removed the experiences of the unstructured setting, would Nate be trying out for football in the Fall? Would he have the confidence to do that? In his own words,

> Now I know that I can play good enough to not be a joke. My friends said I'm pretty good and that I should try out and they have been playing on a team for a while. I feel like I am better than I was because I have been playing a lot more in the yard.

Performing as Reward

Similar to the notion that playing organized sports is an opportunity to show off how hard they have worked and how much they have practiced, some boys also view playing organized sports as a reward for doing the "right" things: keeping their grades up, being well-behaved, and being kind to their siblings. Cooper, for example, captured this sentiment during a casual conversation in between games at a baseball tournament:

> Cooper: Well, I think it's a privilege to play, 'cause you have to get good grades and be good.
>
> Researcher: Now, are you talking about for organized sports, like your Select team?
>
> Cooper: Yeah.
>
> Researcher: So, you view that as like, "OK, I've worked hard, and now I get to do this because of that."
>
> Cooper: Yeah, it's like a reward.

This display of gratitude is enabled, at least in part, by the previously mentioned skill and control of movement developed during informal sport participation. Although it is a somewhat dated (and challenged) theoretical model, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of

needs offers a useful heuristic to consider the notion that once individuals are able to develop and master "esteem," their highest order "deficiency need," they can then move on to try to become self-actualized in achieving their most satisfying performance. Playing sports in unstructured settings provides an opportunity to better their skills so that they feel more self-assured when it comes time for them to perform on public display. In fact, like Nate's experience, a number of the boys highlighted that if they couldn't play with their friends, then their only practice would be at practice and at games, and that did not seem to be enough time in their minds. Informal play, then, makes them more confident in displaying their abilities in a social setting, and this confidence allows them to feel enough comfort to enjoy the actual games as a chance to evaluate themselves and to be evaluated. Were it not for the care-free practice time that informal sports afford, there would be considerable anxiety experienced during actual games, which would make them less appealing to continue playing.

The very fact that these boys have the opportunity to participate in unstructured, consequence-free sport experiences not only allows many of them to experience public performance and evaluation as a reward, but it also influences their perceptions about their sense of duty (and that of their teammates) to honor the magnitude of the organized sport forum. In some form or another, each of the boys expressed their enjoyment over the experience of not having to try so hard in an unstructured setting, such as Steven's experience of playing lacrosse with his neighborhood friends:

> What I like about playing with my friends is that I don't have to try that hard to be good. It's more about having fun than trying hard. Sometimes I shoot the ball in my own goal just for fun because nobody really cares. When I screw around, my friends jump on me and wrestle me but they can never make me run a lap or something.

Compare this experience with the frustration expressed by Steven about one of the goalies on his travel lacrosse team:

> Well, our goalie…well, we have two goalies. The first one, his name's Sean, he's pretty good. But the other one, he doesn't really care that much, so he doesn't really try that hard. So when he misses one, he's like, "Aw, shucks, I missed it" and never really cares about it that much. It makes me mad.

In essence, not only is the expectation about the amount of effort required of their play different in unstructured and organized settings, but the existence of the unstructured opportunities to play the games however the child wants only intensifies the responsibility to treat the organized sport opportunities with the type of reverence and respect that they are perceived to merit. For this group of boys, the existence of an alternative forum through which to both gain "esteem" and to behave however they like without repercussion permits them to consider the experience of playing organized sports differently. Instead of conveying anxiety over the outcomes of their performance or frustration over a lack of control, even the less capable and confident boys see organized sport as a reward for their preparedness, and revere the forum that the organized setting affords them.

Adults as Facilitators

Almost uniformly, the reverence and maturity that the ten boys display with respect to organized sports as a type of reward also carries over to their experiences with adults (coaches and parents) as constructive forces who support them and want to make them better. When asked about coaches being hard on them or yelling at them, nearly all of the boys reply that the coaches are just trying to help them become better athletes and better people. Moreover, the majority of the boys characterize parents not as success-driven or controlling, but as supportive and encouraging. Such a characterization was

unexpected from a research standpoint given the popular portrayal of overbearing adults corrupting the youth sport experience, particularly in communities with a fervent, successful sporting tradition (cf. Bissinger, 1990). The personal experiences of the researcher as a former elite basketball coach also suggested that Riggins would be an environment rife with borderline abusive parents and coaches pushing children to succeed on the field at any cost. Although the behavior of many of the adults encountered during this research approached the level of irrationality someone with experience working in youth sport might expect, the key distinction separating Riggins from other youth sport environments is the unwillingness of the majority of the boys to experience the behavior in anything but a supportive and encouraging manner. This ability to perceive adults as enablers instead of detractors in organized sport settings is a direct result of the autonomy that the boys possess during unstructured play; the control that they possess in unstructured settings allows them to embrace the lack of control in organized settings. Darren alluded to this interplay during one of his interviews:

> Researcher: So say there's a conflict. Say something happens, like you can't tell if [the ball] was out or across the goal line you guys created or something. How do you figure it out?
>
> Darren: If there's two bad calls, we'll be like, "You guys got that…You guys got the advantage on that, so we'll get this."
>
> Researcher: Well, how is that different than like when you're playing in Select?
>
> Darren: Select, it's like the umpire's call. They can call anything.
>
> Researcher: What do you think about that?
>
> Darren: I don't mind. That's part of the game. I may not like it, but in a Select game, that's how it is. We can do whatever we want when it's just us. It doesn't work that way in a Select game.

Not only do most of the boys convey willingness to accept the restrictions and parameters of organized sport, but they also experience the exhortations and criticism of adults as empowering rather than threatening. When reflecting on the experience of dropping an important pass during an organized football game, Christian recalls that his parents were "relaxed" and "didn't care" and told him "It's ok. Just keep trying." The researcher's field notes taken while in close proximity of Christian's parents on the sidelines during the incident paint it in a slightly different light:

> Christian just let a would-be touchdown slip through his outstretched fingers on a crucial third-and-long. He remained on the ground a few beats longer than normal. Thought he might be hurt but seems it was just the disappointment that kept him down. The collective groan from the sideline is broken only by the voice of [his father], clearly agitated but attempting to restrain himself, bellowing "Alright, Chris. Get your ass up and get back to the huddle. You'll catch the next one." I guess that is one form of encouragement. (Field Notes, 11 November 2010)

While Christian's father was assuredly not relaxed or apathetic, he was encouraging -- only not in quite as innocuous a manner as Christian remembers. Time and again, however, all but one or two of boys displayed moments where they either shirked off adult misbehavior as a form of caring or they went so far as to assert that the adults were not being hard enough on them. As Patrick notes,

> I kinda like it when the coaches yell at me, because then I'll know what I did wrong. And then I try to fix it, because I have to have everything perfect. I want everything but I get, like, mad if I mess up. Like, I will chew myself out…And I know the coaches are like, "Just play to have fun," but I like to play to win.

The significance of this dynamic is not to assert that this group of boys is complicit in its own abuse, but rather to highlight the empowerment that the interplay between the unstructured and organized settings affords many of them. Like their ability to view the experience of playing organized sports as a reward for hard work and doing the "right" things instead of a forum for embarrassment or misery, playing sports in unstructured

settings also enables the majority of the boys to view adults as facilitators to help them achieve success. Working hard in organized practices and games becomes meaningful and significant because the boys have opportunities to offset or balance the hard work required of the organized setting with the playfulness of the unstructured setting:

> Researcher: If you had to say what you get out of playing sports, what would it be?
>
> David: Having fun.
>
> Researcher: Having fun? So you don't necessarily care if you go to college on a scholarship or anything like that?
>
> David: Well, I guess it'd sort of be fun to play in college. It'd save my parents money. I know it is a lot of hard work to make it, but if I have fun when I am playing with my friends [in the neighborhood], I don't mind working hard for it the other times.
>
> Researcher: Do your parents or your coaches ever talk about that kind of stuff?
>
> David: Um…Not really my parents, but my coaches do.
>
> Researcher: What do your coaches say about it?
>
> David: Just that some people on our team could maybe make like Division II or Division III. And if we work hard, maybe like a not very good school in Division I.
>
> Researcher: What do you think when you hear that?
>
> David: It makes me care more.

Hard work is a virtue instilled by the adults in Riggins. It is a virtue, however, that is sustainable because of the juxtaposition of organized settings with unstructured settings. Burnout is not an issue at this stage for any of the boys in this study, despite demanding organized sport calendars. As David alludes, the fact that he makes time to play enables him to view the experience of putting in hard work as an opportunity instead

of a burden. Consequently, the adult-imposed expectations of the organized sport experience are met with excitement instead of dread.

Organized Settings Influence the Lived Experience of Playing Unstructured Sports

For all of these boys, the setting in which their participation occurs has a direct impact on both the kinesthetic character of their play and in the meanings they ascribe to the experience. During the months of close observation of their sports participation in both organized and unstructured settings, the boys played in typically one of two locations: the baseball fields of the athletics complex owned by the RYA or the playground and basketball courts of the elementary school that all but two of the boys formerly attended. In addition to being available for unstructured play, the sports complex also served as the primary location for the practices and games of the competitive travel teams that nine of the ten boys played on; the elementary school playground, on the other hand, was the physical space where recess took place for five or six of the previous six or seven years of most of their lives. This distinction is critical in explaining two significant discrepancies witnessed both across and within the two physical environments. First, changing the setting in which play is experienced changes the nature of the expression of the boys' play. Second, changing settings also alters the meanings that are attributed to their play.

Changing Settings Changes Behaviors

When playing sandlot or pickup baseball at the athletics fields -- the same fields where the boys play their organized, competitive games -- the character of the boys' play constrains itself to fit more in line with the type of play that is expected of them during their organized sport experiences. The routines and processes associated with a typical

practice or game environment emerge as the predominant set of behaviors, even when no adults or spectators are present:

> Rather than jumping right into a game, the boys begin their play by engaging in 'long toss' and hitting grounders to warm up the fielders. There is little explicit discussion about these pre-play exercises. In fact, the behaviors seem almost automated. Somewhat taken aback, I glance toward the surrounding bleachers and dugouts, expecting to see a coach or parent secretly directing this warm-up extravaganza. Nobody there. Could this be for my benefit? By now [almost seven weeks] they know me well enough to understand that I am not a scout or a spy -- plus, they have played in my presence a number of times. This is the first time that we are playing baseball at the baseball fields, though. Perhaps they are just on autopilot because of how many hours they have spent here for practices and games. (Field Notes, 7 November 2010)

While the excerpt from these initial field notes captures the first moment when this phenomenon occurred, it did not mark the last time when playing sandlot baseball at the baseball fields represented this simulacrum of organized sport in an unstructured setting. Over the period of observation, this behavioral pattern continued to varying degrees whenever the boys played this sport in this particular environment. Aside from the occasional digression to an extended game of 'pickle' when one of the boys attempts to steal a base, the organized form of the game is preserved in near-entirety: the rules remain the same, the boys play the positions coaches normally assign to them, even the on-deck and pre-swing routines model the behaviors witnessed during their organized games. For as striking as it appears to an observer, this pattern goes virtually unnoticed by the boys themselves:

> Researcher: So, talk to me about what you guys did out there today.
>
> Wyatt: We just went out and played -- had fun.
>
> Researcher: I noticed that you didn't jump right into playing, but you first warmed up a bit.
>
> Wyatt: Well, I just wanted to be loose so I don't hurt my arm.

Researcher: That makes sense. What about when we play over at [the elementary school]? Like, before we play basketball or something? I never see you guys get in lay-up lines or anything, but when we've come over to the fields, it seems like you guys are warming up for like a real game.

Wyatt: I don't know. I guess we are just goofing off over there, so it doesn't matter.

Researcher: Aren't we just goofing off here too?

Wyatt: [laughs] I guess so. I guess I don't know why.

When the boys play at the elementary school playground, on the other hand, their behavior (as a group) displays very little resemblance to the movements and interactions experienced in organized sports. In every session but one, playing pickup basketball at the elementary school courts lasted less than 20 minutes before their play transformed from dribbling, passing, and shooting to tackling and punting the ball. After this shift, the entire group of boys would typically spend the next 60-90 minutes screaming and chasing each other around the playground and surrounding fields. This play often produces many scraped knees and tearful arguments, but what it does not produce is an unsupervised simulation of an organized practice or game.

The disparity between the patterns of play in the two physical environments demonstrates that some psychosocial cues are indicating to the boys the type of behavior that is expected of them in the different environments. The baseball fields are the place where the majority of them primarily experience playing organized sports in front of adults who expect them to perform with a level of competence and maturity that will enable desired outcomes such as winning and individual success; in other words, to act like an adult. The elementary school playground is a place where the associated expectations are much different: to run, play, act wild and crazy; in other words, to act

like a child. In this particular case, the established behavioral expectations of each setting influence the nature of the children's play, whether the activity is organized or not.

There is also evidence that shifting the physical environment for the child's play influences the temporal experience associated with his play as well. Not only was the elementary school the place that most of the boys associate with playing as opposed to working, but it was the place where many of them played before they even had an awareness that play could be organized to the degree that it is in organized settings. Certainly play at any age can be governed by varying degrees of organization, but the playgrounds of the elementary school are where eight of these boys played when their only concerns were the experiences of exploring the abilities of their bodies for autotelic purposes. Now, with the increasing demands associated with playing organized sport, the experience of playing at the elementary school allows them to re-experience what it was like to play for the sake of play.

Changing Settings Changes Meanings

Not only are the manifestations of the boys' play influenced by the environmental setting in which the play occurs, but the meanings of the experiences can vary depending on whether the experience occurs in an organized sport setting or an unstructured, play-like setting. On the whole, each of the boys generally feels that his coaches and parents are very supportive and encouraging. As described in an earlier section, the maturity that these particular boys display with regard to appreciating the discipline that adults work to instill in them is remarkable. Nevertheless, many of their negative experiences center around a mistake they made in an organized sport setting. Their best memories, however, are often self-deprecating accounts of times when they "did something stupid" or made a mistake playing informally with friends and everyone laughed about it. This implies that

the setting impacts the emotions experienced during or after what could be kinesthetically equivalent acts. Consider the following descriptions drawn from Kurt's stories about some of his favorite and least favorite moments playing sports:

> One of the funnest [sic] times was when I had slept over and me and David and Nate were playing [football] in the yard before church. I caught the ball and was running and then I tripped over my pants and fell. I messed up my pants really bad and the ball flew out of my hands and David snatched it out of the air and ran it back for a touchdown. We couldn't stop laughing. It was awesome.
>
> My least favorite memory was when I was playing lacrosse and we were at a tournament and I had the ball and was running with it and I was going for toward [sic] the goal and I tripped on my stick when I went to shoot. It was really bad because I had like an open goal to shoot on and everybody was yelling at me and the other team was laughing at me.

In both cases, Kurt had the ball, was in the process of running towards a goal, and tripped, causing him to lose the ball and not reach his goal. In the organized setting, this experience was traumatic and reflected on as one of his most salient unpleasant memories. In the unstructured setting, Kurt identified what was virtually the same corporeal experience (although with a different sport) as one of his fondest memories. I later asked him about why he felt such different emotions about such similar experiences: "I don't know. I guess because with your friends you know that if you screw up they're not going to be too mad at you." In other words, when the kids are the ones in control of the setting and the evaluation process, they often experience little discomfort as a result of mistakes. When kids are not in control of the evaluation, they feel significantly greater discomfort about relatively equivalent experiences.

LINGUISTIC TRANSFORMATION: PRE-TEEN BOYS' EXPERIENCE PLAYING SPORTS

In phenomenological research, the manner of reporting the meanings of the lived experiences of participants transcends comparative inter-participant and inter-contextual

accounts to encapsulate a meta-meaning of the overall experience. Rather than a simple, reductionistic listing of various themes and sub-themes, the phenomenological researcher produces a narrative wherein "each individual's experiential expressions and interpretive interaction is narrated as one life-world, vivid in description and detail" (Munhall, 2007, p. 199). Both van Manen (1990) and Munhall (2007) refer to this narrative as a linguistic transformation, which draws from the words and descriptions of the participants to capture the contingencies and meaning that have been socially constructed around an experience - in this case, the experience of playing sports for pre-teen boys living in a sport-centric community. As with the more thematic aforementioned findings, this narrative conveys the overall meaning of the youth sport as a whole experience for these boys, and further demonstrates the synergy that emerges beyond the summation of experiences across multiple settings.

For these ten boys growing up in the town of Riggins, the meaning of the experience of playing youth sports (both unstructured and organized) is characterized by a search for their place within the social worlds that exist within the community, and their subsequent search for their place as a member of the broader community within which these smaller social worlds exist. Whether attempting to live up to the expectations of a family of successful athletes, seeking out the camaraderie of a supportive peer group, or establishing himself as a mentor for future generations of children (like the mentors who influenced his development), each of the boys searches for his own small communities to help situate himself as a member of the larger community of Riggins. The following linguistic transformation explores the life-world of "John," a composite of the words and experiences of the boys on a typical November evening during football season.

The Search for Community within Community

"The lights are so bright" they seal out the darkness on these Fall nights. Beyond them sits the rest of Texas; within them, a small community, united in the process of living up to its own identity. The field is "like a snow globe," existing wholly within itself, as "the adrenaline of the crowd yelling on a fourth down play" whirls around and around. The buzz of the cheers swells with anticipation. John stands on the bleachers so that he can see the play over the people in the row in front of him. From this vantage point, he is able to see just about everyone he cares about: his parents and friends in the bleachers on either side of him, his sister leading cheers from the sidelines, his older brother and some of the older neighborhood kids to whom he looks up taking their positions on the field. Amidst the noise and energy, John thinks back to a few weeks ago when he and his friends "were playing in the community park" and some of these same players, who now had the attention of the entire community, invited them to play a lighthearted game of tackle football. These players "already had two state championships, and they were hanging with a bunch of sixth-graders like [they] were literally brothers." Of course, the high-school players "were a lot easier to tackle" that day than they were for tonight's opponents. More than any moment he can recall, that experience makes John "want to go around and do the same thing for other young kids if [he] ever plays high school [football]." In fact, with seventh grade football on the horizon, John's focus is clear: put in the time and effort now so that one day these same lights would be his "spotlight, his reward."

The scoreboard clock winds down to 00:00 and the crowd stands in unison to applaud the "boys in uniform." John takes this opportunity to once again glance around at the faces in the crowd, the faces of Riggins. This community "really cares" about these kids. Yes, they are state champion football players, but they all started out just like him: a

"nobody trying [his] best" in the RYA. John follows the stream of people flowing down the bleacher stairs to exit the stadium. He waves to his sister, congregating with some other cheerleaders on the sideline. She doesn't see his wave. He continues down the stairs, keeping an eye on his dad's blue "RYA Parent" baseball cap (which he purchased when his brother started playing in the RYA) so he doesn't get separated from his family. As the crowd floods out into the parking lot, John catches up with his parents, headed back to the family SUV. Although he won't be riding home with them, he needs to get his "overnight bag and football gear so that he can leave straight from the sleepover to head to his [own] football game in the morning." Grabbing his RYA-issue duffle bag and pajama-filled backpack, John hugs his parents goodbye. They will meet him at his game tomorrow to cheer him on.

Duffle and backpack in tow, John scans the dispersing crowd for his friends. A few moments of searching and he spots them piling into his friend's mom's pickup truck. Once in the truck, the boys chatter with "excitement over the big [Riggins] win." A few more wins and "we'll be headed back to 'State'," they remind one another. The residual energy from the high school game mixes with the anticipation of a fun night ahead and John's mind wanders to his game tomorrow morning. He pictures himself surging past the offensive line and "feels the adrenaline" that comes when "he gets through and it's just him and the quarterback left." He imagines getting "that clean hit and seeing him on the ground. Sure it sounds pretty mean, but it's just so much fun!"

Only a year ago, the thought of playing football in seventh grade, let alone high school, terrified John. He was too nervous to even play football for the RYA, and "nobody would have even cared" how he performed in this setting. If he couldn't bring himself to try football in this environment, how would he ever be able to play for the high school? How could he "carry on the community tradition by winning another state

championship" if he couldn't even strap on a helmet for the meaningless games that came before seventh grade football?

John knew he wasn't a star athlete like his classmates, but how could he be? He didn't live in one of the neighborhoods that were packed with other kids his age playing in the yard before dinner. He didn't have a dad who used to be a star athlete to coach him. All he had were a couple of older sisters and a busy older brother who had their own high school lives, and a dad who traveled a lot. He lived on the outskirts of town and had far "too much math and language arts homework" to find the time to "get good enough to someday play high school ball." It's not that John couldn't "hold his own on the field" -- he had tried playing lacrosse last year and wasn't the worst player on the team, but the time commitment became too much for him. Football was different, though. The boys who excelled at football didn't just play football. They played everything: "Mondays and Wednesdays were basketball to work on footwork" and hand-eye coordination; "Tuesdays and Thursdays were wrestling" to help with their tackling; "Saturdays and Sundays were the games and tournaments." "And this was the off-season!" John just did not have the free time, social support, or confidence to put himself in a position to ever become a contributing member of the high school football team.

Entering the middle school gifted program, John expected to find kids like him. He assumed that the boys in his class "would be pretty smart" and would "spend most of their [free] time working on their homework and studying." Instead, John found that not only were the other boys smart, they were also athletic and outgoing. Yes, they spent a lot of free time keeping their grades up, but they also seemed to find enough time and ability to excel at multiple sports. In fact, their aptitude on the field had recently made itself quite clear during P.E. class. In spite of the other boys' clear athletic superiority, John found himself included in the pickup basketball and touch football games that his

classmates played during free periods. Although John was outmatched physically, his inclusion in the games left him exhilarated, and the other boys seemed not to mind his relative incompetence.

During the ensuing months following his initial inclusion, John and the other boys continued to grow closer, regularly spending their after-school hours playing together and their weekends having group sleepovers. In almost every aspect, John had "become one of them" -- that is, except for playing organized sports. He just couldn't muster the courage to suit up in front of so many parents and other kids, most of whom "had been playing since they were five years old." One day, however, two of his new friends mentioned that their dad, who was a baseball coach with RYA, was planning an event at the baseball fields "where parents could just drop off their kids to play whatever sports they wanted without any grown-ups telling them what to do." While John "didn't really care about baseball," he liked the idea of having a chance to "feel what it's like to play on the 'big' fields": to "smell the grass," to "hear the fences rattle" when a ball hits them, to feel the "spongy" earth under his cleats. If he could play on the RYA's fields when "it was mostly just kids around," then maybe he could "get more comfortable" with the possibility of "play[ing] football on the same fields in the Fall."

Over the span of several "Sandlot Nights," John found that he began to "look forward to playing" while feeling less and less concerned with his insecurities. He liked "being a part of the group" with his new friends, and he liked the interest his parents and brother showed in his new willingness to play sports. The "Sandlot Nights" attracted a range of kids of different ages and abilities, and John became more comfortable with where he fit within this range. He "[wasn't] the best kid playing but [he wasn't] the worst kid," and that was critical for him to see and feel in this type of relaxed setting. After a particularly spirited game of impromptu football in the outfield of one of the baseball

diamonds, one of John's better-performing friends said to him, "You're better than me at some positions, but I'm better than you at most positions." John, elated, heard nothing after "you're better than me at some positions." What excited him even more was the fact that it was true. At some point during the past few months, John had become a decent football player. He could throw and catch and "barely ever drop the ball." Even his dad noticed that he caught the ball more often than ever before during their periodic sessions of "tossing the pigskin around in the backyard." He wasn't yet a very good tackler because it "was still a little scary" -- especially without pads on -- but his experiences with his friends had helped him "to learn what [he was] and [wasn't] good at." He may not be a good a tackler yet, but he could catch better than a lot of the other kids. That was "good enough for [him]," in large part because it was good enough for them. And for his father. And for the "little kid who asked [him] to help him learn how to catch better" at one of the "Sandlot Nights" last month.

Thwappp! John wheezes as his friend thrusts a football into his gut with a little more force than is probably necessary. "C'mon! Get out! We're here." The boys spill out of the pickup truck, each with an RYA duffle bag and an overnight bag slung over their shoulders. The night air feels colder than it did even fifteen minutes ago. With little concern for the dropping temperature, the boys throw down their bags and head out to the backyard to jump on the trampoline. Someone has the idea to practice catching the football by having one person throw it while the others take turns trying to simultaneously "bounce on the trampoline and catch the passes." This "warm-up game" lasts an hour, and after only a brief break from the cold by "drinking hot chocolate and playing video games" inside, the boys decide that they want to camp out tonight, even though "it [is] freezing…and fe[els] like 20 degrees outside."

After some begrudged help from his friend's dad, the boys set up the family tent on top of the trampoline, their collective weight already causing the trampoline to "sink down in the middle." Two of the boys are sliding around the trampoline on the outer edge of the tent in their socks, "going fast enough that you could see sparks shooting up from their feet." Around midnight the energy of the group begins to subside, and the boys settle in to get some sleep before tomorrow morning's game.

John wakes to the "scratchy, wet" feel of a dog licking his face. One of the boys, apparently hot during the night, opened the flaps of the tent and his friend's dogs "were now coming in and out, in and out [of the tent] in a circle." Waking up "cold and wet is not the best way to start a game day," but as the laughter of his friends fills the tent, he can't help but join in. Following "a big, home-cooked breakfast" of scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, and waffles, the boys put on their uniforms, minus shoulder pads and jerseys: pants and thigh pads, socks and cleats, long-sleeve Under Armour shirts. They pile back into the pickup truck to head to the fields. John is not scared or worried about the game. Perhaps more importantly, John is excited about the game. Chit-chat is at a minimum as the boys turn their "focus to the game." When they arrive at the fields, they step out of the truck and walk together toward the field, shoulder pads in hand. They have been here before: the same grass smells freshly cut, the same fences rattle in the distance, the same spongy earth familiar beneath their cleats. John looks ahead of the group and spots his "family waving to [him] from their lawn chairs on the sideline." In the background, he notices some of the younger children from the "Sandlot Nights" playing catch and darting in and out of their seated families. The scoreboard flickers to life as the officials ready for the day's games. Above the flickering of the lights, the name "Riggins" "looks almost underlined."

DISCUSSION

This study considers how the experiences of playing sports in unstructured and organized settings actually inform one another in the creation of meanings for the boys in this community. In so doing, the analysis reveals that informal sports actually change the way participants think about their experiences playing organized sports, and vice versa. For many of the boys in this study, the experience of playing on the organized sports stage demands that when the proverbial curtain lifts, they must assume the roles and personas that their parents/coaches/selves expect them to assume. Conversely, the experience of playing informal sports offers the antithesis to playing organized sports in a public forum. In fact, informal sports serve as a parallel narrative space analogous to a personal diary: a place that is psychosocially safe, private, and inviting, where they can truly be themselves. In essence, informal sports offer an opportunity to rehearse and practice sports in a salubrious, pressure-free environment that allows these boys to play, try, fail, and create without the types of negative repercussions that might occur in an organized, adult-evaluated setting. Although the fundamental differences in experiences engendered in the organized and unstructured settings are themselves significant, taxonomically separating them (i.e., organized *versus* unstructured) creates a false dichotomy that does not account for the important meanings to emerge from the synthesis of the two. The findings of this study offer an integrated paradigm for considering the manner in which playing informal sports actually allows these children to reinterpret, tolerate, and justify the demands of playing organized sports, and vice versa. The overall meaning of playing sports shifts as the boys negotiate the opposing tensions of the two settings. Following this process of negotiation, each of the boys (in one form or another) emerges displaying precocious levels of maturity and long-term perspective about the

meaning of sport participation as not simply a path to fame and glory but a path to connect on deeper levels with the people and community that support him.

The Need to Move Beyond Organized Sport *Versus* Informal Sport Conceptions

As the experiences of this group of boys in Riggins attest, an organized sport setting alone can be inadequate for realizing the mission of organized sport at each phase of sport development. It is inadequate at the recruitment phase because it alone does not allow enough time and opportunity for children to develop all of the skills required to feel competent enough to enjoy playing in organized games. Many of the boys highlighted that informal sport gave them what organized sport could often not: adequate time to practice and to come to understand the limits of their physical abilities. As a result of the opportunity to play in unstructured settings, the confidence that each of the boys developed in their ability to execute the skills and movements necessary to be successful in a sport enabled him to experience organized sport differently (e.g, Nate's experiences). Specifically, practicing in unstructured settings enabled them -- particularly the six or seven higher-level athletes in this group -- to experience the performative aspects of organized sport (along with the role of adults in the process) as opportunities to succeed instead of opportunities to fail.

The organized setting alone is also inadequate at the retention phase because the physical and emotional demands of playing only organized sport can lead to participant burnout and drop-out, particularly in high pressure environments like the one in Riggins. Organized sport is a work-like setting that could become overwhelming for many of the boys in this study were its demands not balanced by playing informal sport in play-like setting. The burnout, drop-out, and general dissatisfaction associated with playing organized sport for a number of children can potentially be mitigated through allowing

them more time to play in an unstructured setting (cf. Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Helsen et al., 1998).

Finally, an organized setting alone does not intrinsically instill a drive to advance to the highest levels of competition for all of the boys in this study. Their desires to play for the local high school football team stem from a sense of community that is instantiated as much in unstructured sport settings as organized settings. In essence, developing the mass and elite athletes that sport development systems need for sustenance requires a balance of participation in organized and unstructured settings. For a sport development system to incorporate one without the other is akin to it operating with one hand tied behind its back.

Through conceptualizing organized and unstructured settings as two parts to the whole sport participation experience for children, those in sport development can immediately alter how they deliver sport. In fact, the interactivity between sport experiences occurring in organized and unstructured settings indicates that conceptualizations (empirical or practical) which do not account for sport experiences in non-organized settings may be inherently limited, if not myopic. In Riggins, the boys' experiences outside of playing organized sport fundamentally redefined their experiences in the organized setting. Therefore, any efforts to interpret their organized sport experiences without also considering how these experiences both influence, and are influenced by, informal sport risks operating within a flawed explanatory framework.

The Need to Move Beyond Developmental Outcomes to Consider Experiences

Giving expression to the meanings of the experience of participating in youth sports for these children expands the understanding of sport participation as more than just the outcomes it produces (cf. Chalip et al., 1984). In fact, the experiences of playing

sports in both organized and unstructured settings influence one another to such an extent that, for the boys in Riggins, the experience in one cannot be understood without an understanding of the experience in the other. As the results of this study demonstrated, the manner in which playing the same sport or making the same mistake differs depending on the setting in which it occurs. Although the experiences contribute to an overall meaning of sport participation, an examination that sought to measure only outcomes would be inherently ill-equipped to uncover these differences in experiences -- and how these differences interact to inform this overall meaning of sport participation.

In considering the empirical explanations offered through the lens of experiences instead of outcomes, there are significant sport development implications -- particularly within the realm of sport-for-development, which seeks to understand how sport can benefit the lives of its participants (cf. Green, 2008). The overall finding that the meaning of sport participation for these boys was grounded in a search for their place within the community has the potential to re-orient current sport development models, which often operate under the implicit assumption that participation is driven primarily by the seeking of extrinsic outcomes such as college scholarships. By grounding youth sport participation in the experiences of the participants, the emphasis of both practitioners and researchers shifts from the outcomes of participation to the process. This shift, in turn, can help to situate the personal development of participants as an ongoing process that merits attention from sport providers. It also permits an understanding about what happens during the process of sport participation, as opposed to just what happens as a result of it. This type of worldview can encourage sport providers and participants to actively engage in taking more control over various aspects of the process through framing experiences as an important -- and controllable -- part of the sport delivery equation.

In Riggins, for example, the overall driving force behind why these boys played sports was about the search for community, not whether they eventually earn a college scholarship. Each of these boys played sports in the hope of carving out a place for themselves within the broader community. This overall meaning driving sport participation derived from the experiences of playing sports in both organized and unstructured settings. In fact, although the organized sport experiences were higher in profile, at least half of the boys attributed much of their desire to become contributing members of the community to the opportunities for both mentoring and being mentored informally in unstructured settings. As the linguistic transformation in the previous section recounted, the times when high school players played informally with these boys proved to be one of the most salient factors in them wanting to become members of the community through sport. In this sense, sport experiences can have a tremendous impact on the personal development of a child beyond simply measuring this development in terms of outcomes.

The Need to Consider Contextual Influences on Sport Participation

Finally, an unexpected but compelling finding to emerge from this study was the dramatic influence of the physical environment on the behavior (and the meanings of that behavior) of the boys. When they played in different environmental contexts, the nature of their behavior often took on the character of the dominant type of play that most often occurs in a particular setting. Regardless of whether the boys were playing at an organized practice or playing a sandlot game with no adults present, their play at the RYA baseball fields often reflected the type of behavior that occurs in an organized setting. Conversely, when they played at the elementary school playground, where many of them spent years frolicking during recess, the boys nearly always ended up diverging

from sport to run and play like one would imagine they did when they were younger. This phenomenon speaks directly to the power of setting on shaping children's sport experiences.

Although admittedly speculation at this stage, the different experiences in different settings may relate to the triggering of schemata within the boys' brains that signal to them the type of behavior that is predominantly associated with their experience in a certain setting. This may also be driving the interpretative differences associated with similar (or equivalent) actions occurring in different settings. For example, Kurt's description of his favorite and least favorite moments playing sports wherein virtually the same experience of tripping while running was perceived in virtually opposite terms. The poignancy of these differences again reaffirms the power of setting to influence the experiences of youth sport participants. The sport development implications from this newfound understanding are that not only can the use of multiple settings foster a broader range of experiences, but what participants experience can change depending on the setting. This knowledge could potentially assist in helping those charged with sport development to understand more about how the manipulation of settings can be a tool to assist in athlete training, although further research is needed to understand the practical use of settings in this manner.

As the results of this study attest, the present literature examining youth sport participation is limited in its explanatory potential through its adoption of a view of youth sport that does not extend beyond the organized setting. The limitations of a non-integrative paradigm not only preclude a complete understanding of the meanings of the experiences of youth sport participation, but also perpetuate a model of youth sport as a monolith with uniform outcomes based more on mythology than reality. The findings from this study, however, demonstrate the importance of moving beyond monolithic

conceptualizations of youth sport to consider the integrated lived experiences of participation within both organized and unstructured settings. Instead of isolating the context-specific experiences or viewing unstructured sport as a substitute or threat to organized sport (or vice versa), this study illustrates the synthesis that emerges from considering sport participation in different settings as parts of a whole. The results of this study also expand the present literature by situating the meanings of experiences engendered by youth sport participation as equally important to the developmental outcomes that participation may instantiate.

CONCLUSION

This study extends the current body of research exploring the impact of youth sport participation by contributing to the empirical examination in two significant areas of the literature that have been limited to this point. First, it challenges the value of the current interpretation that situates organized and unstructured settings as dichotomous. Youth sport researchers have almost exclusively considered the outcomes of sport participation for children as those outcomes derived only from *organized* sport participation, but this study explicates the impact of a child's participation in less structured or less formal sport settings as well. Second, it also challenges the current epistemology that youth sport participation is significant because of the outcomes it engenders. Youth sport participation is often framed in terms of its purported developmental outcomes without mention of the meaningful experiences that also result from participation. In this study, however, the experiences of sport participation are the central focus of the research; the examination of these experiences yields an understanding of the meaning of sport participation that transcends simply its outcomes.

The results of the study are equally relevant to sport development practitioners. The meaning of the lived experience of playing sports is more than the sum of a child's experiences playing unstructured sports and organized sports. Despite the natural tendency to dichotomize experiences in different settings, the boys in this study consistently experienced the crossover influence of playing in both settings as a determining factor in how they viewed the overall meaning of the experience of playing youth sports. This perspective is enabled through the placement of the body as the channel through which youth sports are experienced and interpreted. The interactivity across settings that emerges from this perspective has significant implications for encouraging a sport development paradigm in which sport participation in multiple settings is conceptualized as complementary instead of counterproductive, and the experiences of participants serve to ground understandings about the process of sport participation. As much as coaches, trainers, and sport scientists may want sport training to occur in a vacuum, the results of this study demonstrate that diverse sport experiences occurring in multiple settings are essential to the construction of the overall meaning of playing sports. Unstructured play, in this sense, is not inefficient or unproductive; it is the glue that can bind individual athletes to their teams and communities in meaningful ways.

Ultimately, the findings from the analysis extend the youth sport development literature by demonstrating the importance of conceptualizing sport participation as the synthesis of participation in multiples settings, and asserting the value of understanding the experiences of playing sports in multiple settings and how they impact the overall meaning underlying sport participation. Although van Manen (1990) warns that phenomenology is not intended to provide generalizations to be applied across contexts outside of the one being investigated by the researcher, he clarifies that "one can strengthen the intimacy of the relation between knowledge and action by re-instating

lived experience itself as a valid basis for practical action" (p. 155). This step relies on the understanding of how variations in sport experiences within different settings can contribute to an overall meaning of sport participation for children, and encourages researchers and practitioners to take a more "intimate" approach to "development through sport" efforts.

One of the major hindrances to effective youth sport programs stems from the practice of asking sport to accomplish too much with too little manipulation or variation in the experience for participants. At least part of this quagmire arises from the fact that the mythology of sport participation unquestionably predated the management of it. As Sarason (1972) reminds, however, "the fact that things develop in a certain way is not synonymous with the statement that things *must* develop in a certain way, as if nothing can stop or alter the process" (p. 69). Yet, in spite of the clear evidence that unstructured settings can positively impact the meaning of the overall sport experience for children, sport managers will still face tremendous challenges in any efforts to incorporate them into sport development models. The fundamental challenge is to be able to manage and integrate unstructured settings without imposing the type of structure or organization that would undermine the very characteristics that make unstructured settings beneficial in the first place. At present, sport managers are reasonably adept at managing organized sport contexts, but it remains to be seen whether the management of informal sport is something that could -- or *should* -- be undertaken, and how these efforts might ultimately impact the informal sport experience. It is unclear whether the counterintuitive notion of managing informal sport -- however delicately undertaken -- is even possible without corrupting the experience, and if it indeed proves too vexing, how to then approach fostering more informal sport experiences without direct policy or program integration.

Nevertheless, this research inverts the assumption that the outcomes of sport participation are universal, and demonstrates that the experience of participating across multiple sport settings can coalesce to shape a more holistic meaning of sport participation. By gaining a more "intimate" understanding of how the experiences of participating in different settings contribute to an overall meaning of youth sport participation, sport managers are in a position to leverage this knowledge to design and implement programs that incorporate a broader array of experiences for a more meaningful youth sport experience. Although this study only offers an initial step toward understanding youth sport participation in different settings, it represents an ontological shift which implores sport managers to reconsider the legitimacy of sport experiences that fall outside the realm of organized sport as not a threat, but rather a complement, to a child's overall sport experience.

Chapter 4: Assessing the Relationship Between Youth Sport Participation Settings and Creativity in Adulthood

> From politics to business to education to sports, creativity is one of the buzzwords of this decade. We used to think of creativity as the province of artists, musicians and writers. Now we're waking up to the fact that all facets of modern life demand creative input. (Carson, 2010)

Scholars consider the free play of childhood to be a fertile ground for the development of individual creativity (Frost, Wortham, & Reifel, 2008). Children's lives, however, are increasingly filled with organized, adult-like activity (Postman, 1994). Children's leisure, long considered a time for unstructured activity and play, is almost disappearing from their lives, replaced with formal, adult-led activities (Chudacoff, 2007). One area where this shift toward formalizing children's leisure activity has been particularly pronounced is in the realm of youth sports. In addition to playing organized sports, previous generations of children also spent a large portion of their leisure time playing unsupervised informal sports in neighborhoods and nearby parks (cf. Ogden, 2002). Over the past few decades, however, the shift toward increasing time spent in organized sport settings has created a youth sport environment where there is little opportunity for playing in these unstructured settings (Devereaux, 1976). Disappearing along with these settings for unstructured play are opportunities for critical developmental processes, such as the development of creativity.

Central to the shift toward formalization of children's leisure are two parental drives: to encourage and facilitate their child's achievement, and to minimize the risk to which their child is exposed. The marketplace has responded to these parental desires by offering safe, adult-supervised activities which purport to prepare young people to achieve. Organized youth sport is popular with parents who value achievement and

organized activity for their children. Traditional sport settings are achievement oriented, adult-driven (hence perceived as safe), and are believed to provide children with a wide range of benefits such as health, socialization, character building, time management skills, and even a chance to earn a college scholarship. At the same time, many sport settings are organized to reflect the structure and culture of professional sport settings (cf. Rigauer, 1981). Coaches are often authoritarian; children are encouraged to specialize at an early age; hard work and intense focus are prized above fun, spontaneity, and creativity.

In the past, children received complementary skills via their participation in unstructured sport settings (e.g., sandlot baseball, pickup basketball) (Devereaux, 1976). Informal sport has been shown to enhance participants' social (problem solving ability, conflict management skills, flexibility), emotional (self-concept, perspective taking, moral reasoning), and cognitive development (spatial reasoning, seriation, creativity) (cf. Frost et al., 2008). These settings are notable for their lack of adult oversight, flexibility of rules, and emphasis on continuous play over start-stop activities such as drills. In short, unstructured settings are play-like, while organized settings tend to be more work-like. Alas, unstructured settings are less acceptable when considering parents' goals for their children (Ogden, 2002). They are less safe, as there is no adult supervision. They are defined as play, thus their ability to prepare children for success is, at best, undervalued. Not surprisingly, therefore, informal sport opportunities are disappearing from children's already-diminished leisure time. While the shift away from playing sports in unstructured settings continues to pervade the youth sport landscape, researchers know little about the impact of this shift on developmental outcomes such as creativity, which is typically fostered in less structured environments.

Yet, the development of creativity has emerged as having great significance for the abilities of both individuals and societies to adapt and function in a rapidly changing world. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) contends that creativity allows individuals to cross the boundaries of domains and synthesize information in a manner that permits them to address issues with greater flexibility and fluidity. Carson (2010) argues that the fundamental changes in technology, cyber-communication, and globalization are transforming the manner in which people learn, do business, and form relationships with one another. Without developing creative abilities, people will struggle to keep pace with changes to their environments and will be ill-equipped to negotiate the types of complex problems that are likely to emerge in the coming decades.

In fact, in an era where fostering creativity and innovation is at the forefront of domestic and international policy agendas, sport researchers have largely ignored the subject (cf. White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2009). Perhaps this is unsurprising given that "creativity as a problem of study is large, unwieldy, and hard to grasp" (Sternberg, 2006, p. 3). Although the reasons creativity is given such scant attention in the broader literature related to sport development do not appear to have been delineated in any sport-related scholarly outlet, there are intuitive philosophical, ideological, and even practical barriers that may have contributed to the dearth of research into the topic.

First, sport's sociohistorical development reveals an underlying culture much more in line with principles of militarism, authority, and obedience than creativity. In some respects, the cultivation and expression of creativity may be considered anathema to traditional models of sport development which are predicated on authoritarian instruction and repetition-based tactical training. Creative expression, after all, is nearly antithetical to many of the reinforced behaviors associated with sport participation, such

as adherence to authority, de-individualization, and the routinization of movement. Second, creativity and expression, as social constructs, emerge out of a more liberal ideological basis that some might perceive as incompatible with the values traditionally espoused to characterize sportsmen, such as toughness, single-minded determination, and faith/trust in coaching. Third, and perhaps more convincingly, creativity is simply difficult to operationalize and study in a sport setting.

In spite of these potential barriers to studying creativity, anyone who has been involved with sport at any level likely has anecdotal evidence to support the value of creativity in sport. Whether admiring Pete Maravich's vision and passing prowess on the basketball court, appreciating Doug Flutie's improvisational style of quarterbacking on the football field, or watching in awe while Carlos Valderrama effortlessly distributes a soccer ball around the pitch, creativity holds an undeniable place in the fabric of sport. Something about the unique abilities of each of these players (and others like them) represents both an aesthetic and strategic aberration from the norm -- an aberration that is not thought to be fostered within the athlete's training in sport but to come from some mystical source. Traditionally, this aberrant behavior is attributed to talent. As Durand-Bush and Salmela (2001) note, "the belief that innate talent is, in fact, a primary construct for exceptional athletic performance is reinforced daily in almost every sport telecast, where the word 'talented' is used as a synonym for 'highly skilled' athlete" (p. 269). However, as Chambliss (1989) and a number of authors have discussed, "talent fails as an explanation for athletic success, on conceptual grounds. It mystifies excellence, subsuming a complex set of discrete actions behind a single undifferentiated concept" (p. 78). Creativity, as an individual attribute, may arguably be one of these so-called "subsumed" characteristics that are lost in the "talent" explanation for excellence.

While this possibility might strike a layperson as inconsequential, those charged with the advancement of sport development should consider the implications of such a nebulous explanation, both from a scientific and practical standpoint. While a failure to adequately foster opportunities for creative development is not unique to the sport context (cf. Sawyer, 2006), the dearth of creativity research within the sport literature may speak to a broader incongruence between the values and practices in modern sport and the philosophical tenants underpinning creativity. In many ways the youth sport development systems in the United States have rendered a predominantly organized sport experience that seemingly does little to foster creativity in its child participants. As a result, this study explores the relationship between time spent in both structured, organized sport and unstructured, informal sport during childhood and the development of creativity in adulthood. Clarifying the relationships between these two types of settings and the development of creativity is a step towards legitimating further study examining children's experiences in settings which give rise to important developmental benefits. This study has important implications for the design and implementation of youth sport settings to facilitate child development. Further, the results of this study may influence parents, educators, and youth policymakers to provide more child-centered, informal sport and play opportunities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing scholarship focused on exploring the relationship between sport and creativity is only beginning to develop and remains relatively narrow where it does exist (Memmert, 2006). Morris (2000) provides a review of the sport psychology literature related to psychological characteristics and sport performance, with a particular emphasis on talent identification practices in soccer. In his thorough examination of the current

body of research, he notes that only one particular investigation on the influence of creativity on the success of young athletes has demonstrated a compelling finding. In this study, Kovac (1996) examined 59 boys (14-17 years old) at a soccer-specific secondary school utilizing Urban and Jellen's (1993) Figural Creativity Test and the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. In the study, Morris reports that Kovac found creativity to be correlated with success among the young athletes. Another meta-analysis examining the impact of exercise on children's cognitive functioning found that children who participated in aerobic exercise performed higher on the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Tomporowski et al., 2008).

Recently, however, Memmert has produced a number of compelling experimental studies on the effectiveness of programs aimed at training in-game, tactical creativity in sport. Memmert (2006) conducted two studies related to the development of creativity in gifted non-athletes as part of a sport enrichment program aimed at promoting creative thinking in team ball sports. The first study was a six-month longitudinal study of 33 gifted non-athletes in which the children were trained in a diversified enrichment curriculum based on three main pillars: playful situation-oriented access, ability-oriented access, and skill-oriented access. Comparing a gifted treatment group with a non-gifted treatment group and a gifted control group, the creative performance of the gifted treatment group significantly improved compared to the comparison samples on a series of in-game, situational measures of creativity. In a follow-up study aimed at understanding the somewhat surprising results of the first study, Memmert employed the inattentional blindness paradigm to explore the individual differences in visual attention of gifted and non-gifted children. The results demonstrated that the gifted children attained faster levels of automation in their thought processes, which allowed them to free up attentional capacity for other tasks, in turn allowing them to more creatively approach

a situation. In follow-up studies, Memmert (2007, 2009) has also demonstrated that a training program focused on broadening attention led to an increase in sport-specific, in-game creative performance, and that children with lower levels of inattentional blindness produced more novel responses in a test of divergent thinking.

Memmert and Roth (2007) conducted a study to examine the efficacy of creativity training interventions on the development of tactical creativity in a group of elementary-aged children playing handball, soccer, or field hockey. Participants were assigned to both specific and non-specific training conditions, and the results indicated that children exposed to specific tactical training for a given sport improved their tactical creativity in that sport while children exposed to the non-specific training condition showed improvements in general creativity measures. Similarly, an analysis of the neural networks of participants in a creativity training program found that while practice in a specific sport initially increases creative performance, continued exposure to training precipitates a sharp decline in creativity over time (Memmert & Perl, 2009).

Although the authors offer a number of potential implications from these findings, the notion that less deliberate, less structured forms of sport can influence the development of general creativity in children provides compelling support for the questions raised in this study. If participation in less-specific forms of sport can enhance the development of general creativity in children, one might wonder if prolonged exposure to these types of conditions could engender higher levels of creativity in participants and vice versa; that is, the greater the exposure to the specific training conditions found in the deliberate practice associated with much of youth sport, the narrower the child's creative development. This implication corroborates a previous quasi-experimental study indicating that a sample of Brazilian children, naturally exposed to broader, unguided stimuli and game experiences, demonstrated higher levels of

improvement in general measures of creativity than a sample of German children receiving the specific tactical instruction and coaching characteristic of German sport clubs (Raab, Hamsen, Roth, & Greco, 2001).

Finally, a recent study conducted by Memmert, Baker, and Bertsch (2010) examined the role of practice conditions in the development of sport-specific creativity for elite athletes in team ball sports. In this study, 72 professional athletes (average age of 23.2 years) within the German sport development system were identified and selected by their trainers as being one of either the three most creative or the three least creative players on their respective teams. After collecting data on the detailed sport training and play experiences of the participants, the authors found that those athletes identified as "highly creative" only differed significantly from their "less creative" counterparts in one aspect of their childhood and adolescent sport backgrounds: the creative athletes spent more time participating in unstructured play related to their sport. While the authors temper the results by suggesting that "play is important but only to a point," their emphasis is on tracing the path to expertise and elite-level performance (p. 12). Although they do not examine the impact of time spent in play on the development of general creativity, the authors maintain that this study provides further "support for the notion that creativity is learned and stored early in life," and that sport is a salient context for understanding this creative development (p. 12).

Although Memmert and his colleagues have made significant strides in understanding the impact of training programs on the development of sport-specific creativity within samples of primarily elite-level youth and adult athletes at different stages within the German sport development system, the relationship between sport participation and the general development of creativity remains largely unexamined. That is, while Memmert's emerging body of research is clearly demonstrating that training

creativity on the sports field can produce athletes who are more creative within that specific sport context, the possible impact of youth sport participation -- as most children experience it -- on the development of creativity outside of the sport context remains unarticulated. In other words, is it not only possible to develop creativity *in* sport, but perhaps to develop creativity *through* sport? And if it is indeed possible for sport participation to influence general creative intelligence, what are the contextual boundary conditions that may foster or inhibit this development?

Creativity and Context

According to inferences drawn from the research of creativity theorists, the participative context plays a critical role in whether or not creativity can be developed (e.g., Rogers, 1959). While the vast majority of studies have focused on understanding parental practices and educational environments that are conducive to creative development, the findings should retain at least a theoretical applicability for considering participative youth sport contexts. When seeking to understand and explicate the development of creativity throughout the lifespan, it is essential that researchers focus on the social-contextual conditions of childhood (Koestner, Welker, & Fichman, 1999). Rogers (1959), whose seminal article on the theoretical conditions necessary to foster creative development is considered by most creativity researchers to have laid the groundwork for empirical inquiry into this issue, argued that if a researcher were to take two matched groups, "the one in which a leader establishes a measurably greater degree of conditions of psychological safety and freedom will spontaneously form a greater number of creative products, and these products will be judged to be significantly more novel" (p. 78).

A considerable amount of research has found that play environments have the potential to enhance creativity (Frost, Wortham, & Reifel, 2008). Within this body of scholarship, play has been shown to have a positive influence on two primary means of creative expression: problem solving and ideational fluency. With respect to problem solving, play experiences can help children learn to generate a broader range of solutions to challenging problems (Curran, 1999; Wyver & Spence, 1999). In terms of ideational fluency, a meta-analysis of the literature on play and development conducted by Fisher (1992) determined that children who spend more time in open-ended play tend to display an increased ability to generate a myriad of divergent ideas in their writing, language, and artistic endeavors. Similarly, children who are allowed to co-create their own games within a playful learning environment see a positive impact on the development of creativity (Kangas, 2010), and children exposed to a play intervention program showed significant increases in verbal and figural creativity (Garaigordobil, 2006).

In virtually every instance, the existing literature clearly demarcates the types of environments that will nurture creativity and those that will stamp it out or restrain its potential growth. Aside from a smaller body of research demonstrating that environmental alienation (Tardiff & Sternberg, 1988), parental strife (c.f. Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000), strict discipline (Gardner, 1994), and extrinsic rewards (Eisenberger, 1992) can be conducive to creative development, the empirical research that has since emerged to test this general claim has largely substantiated the notions put forth by Rogers. That is, children who are exposed to developmental contexts in which there is freedom from competition (Gerrard, Poteat, & Ironsmith, 1996; Kohn, 1992), an absence of evaluation (Amabile, 1979; Koestner et al., 1984), and no provision of extrinsic rewards (Eisenberg & Shanock, 2003; Hennesy & Amabile, 1988; Kasof, Chen, Himsel,

& Greenberger, 2007), tend to demonstrate higher levels of creativity both in childhood and adulthood (e.g., Mackinnon, 1962).

Organized sport, as it is traditionally defined, would seem to be a poor environment for fostering creativity in children, and yet, parents continue to seek it out for their child's development. With so little evidence upon which to understand what youth sport settings do and do not provide in terms of developmental outcomes, parents must decide to have their child play in certain sport settings based on the cultural mythology about the benefits their child supposedly accrues, not on empirical fact. Organized sport may foster certain developmental outcomes, but the range of these outcomes may be limited by the organized setting. Unlike the aforementioned characteristics of environments conducive to the development of creativity in children, organized sport is predicated on competition, evaluation, and extrinsic goal structures (Guttman, 2004).

Organized sport, despite its increasing pervasiveness, is not the only form of sport that retains relevance for sport development (cf. Ogden, 2002). In fact, the playful, informal types of sport participation (such as those found in neighborhood pickup games) can provide fertile ground for a number of developmental outcomes through their de-emphasis of zero-sum competition in favor of processual outcomes, and their allowance for self-governance in place of adult control. As Csikiszentmihalyi (1996) notes in his study of creative adults, "It is easier to enhance creativity by changing conditions in the environment than by trying to make people think more creatively" (p. 1).

Sport as Play, Play as Creativity

Two of the most influential child development and play theorists posit that the informal incarnations of sport represent an essential form of developmental play, and that

play itself is conducive to the development of creativity. Vygotsky (1978) explicitly identifies sport as a potential outlet for play. To ensure that sport is not precluded from being considered play on definitional grounds, Vygotsky takes careful consideration in noting that "to define play as an activity which gives pleasure to the child is inaccurate…Sporting games (not only athletic sports, but other games that can be won or lost) are very often accompanied by displeasure when the outcome is unfavorable to the child" (p. 92). For Vygotsky, athletic activities become the predominant form of play for school-age children, and although they represent a more limited (and less developmentally significant) form of play, sports do fill a specific role for children. He asserts,

> As play develops, we see a movement towards the conscious realization of its purpose…In sports, the purpose of the game is one of its dominant features, without which there would be no point – like examining a piece of candy, putting it into one's mouth, chewing it, and then spitting it out. In such play, the object, which is to win, is recognized in advance. (p. 103)

The rules of sport are therefore the purpose that gives the activity meaning for the child as he/she learns to reason in a more complex manner. At this stage, play (often in the form of sport) shifts from the realm of the imaginary to being grounded in the child's actual memory, and helps develop an abstract understanding of the division between work and play. One could extrapolate this assessment to propose that sport, in a sense, has the potential to function as a "zone of proximal development" wherein the negotiation of social situations, morality, and rules is facilitated. Within the confines of informal sport and games, a child may experience, and learn to manage, emotions and relationships in a psychologically safe environment that legitimates an opportunity for a child to behave "as though he were a head taller than himself" (p. 102).

Within play environments, Vygotsky also sees an opportunity for the development of the creative imagination as children's play activities foster higher-level mental processes that are consciously regulated through the child's inner speech (Smolucha, 1992). As the child enters the age when formalized games and sports become the primary form of play, creativity increases through the interaction between imagination and conceptual thought. For Vygotsky, imagination and creativity are always based in reality, and "play is imagination in action: a creative process that develops in play because a real situation takes a new and unfamiliar meaning" (Lindqvist, 2003, p. 249). Through object substitutions (e.g., a stick straddled by the child who pretends it is a horse) and play interactions with adults/older peers, children learn to consider reality in more imaginative terms. In this sense, a neighborhood stickball game affords the context through which children might imagine themselves as major league players competing in the World Series. Within this type of fantasy play, children are able to engage in the cognitive processes that facilitate the development of creativity through the integration of reality and imagination.

Like Vygotsky, Piaget (1962) also focuses on the seemingly inexorable movement toward games with rules as children age. Piaget identifies three stages of play as a form of cognitive assimilation: functional play, symbolic play, and games with rules. In characterizing games with rules, the category under which sport must fall, Piaget contends that "they are the ludic activity of the socialized being" (p. 142). By this he simply means that as assimilation overtakes accommodation in the development of the child, the negotiation of social situations and interactions moves to the developmental forefront: "Just as the symbol replaces mere practice as soon as thought makes its appearance, so the rule replaces the symbol and integrates practice as soon as certain

social relationships are formed, and the question is to discover these relationships" (p. 142).

While Piaget posits that games with rules may be less significant in the development of the mind than earlier forms of play, they are nevertheless essential in the social education of the child who is to become a functioning adult member of society. In fact, Piaget explicitly asserts that through the social interaction and the creation and negotiation of rules that occur in self-governed children's games, children acquire the necessary cognitive skills to develop moral judgment and reasoning, among other outcomes (cf. Piaget, 1932). One such outcome could occur in the form of creative development.

Although scholars have criticized Piaget for failing to adequately address the development of creativity within his theoretical framework, Ayman-Nolley (1999) contends that the dialectical explanation of assimilation and accommodation offers clear implications for understanding creativity from a Piagetian perspective. During assimilation, the individual adjusts the reality of the environment to his or her existing schema, whereas during accommodation, the existing schema are adjusted to fit the reality. In both cases, "the individual is the active integrator of self and environment" with the environment serving as the "boundaries of expression" for the creative product (Ayman-Nolley, 1999, p. 274). By extension, a play environment with fewer "boundaries" would afford increased opportunity for the development of creative thoughts and products. In this regard, the developmental process of play serves as the foundation for creativity insofar as "the ludic symbol itself is integrated in intelligent activity to the extent to which the symbolism is preparation for the construction of representation and free assimilation becomes creative imagination" (Piaget, 1962, p. 213). In other words, play begets creativity, and more playful forms of sport participation

would be expected to beget more opportunities for the development of creative imagination.

Vygotksy's and Piaget's developmental theories provide a rarely explicated theoretical link between informal sport participation in childhood and the development of creativity. Both identify children's self-governed sports and games as important forms of developmental play, which themselves are posited as critical incubators for the nurturance of creative thought in childhood and adulthood. Although the direct relationship between sport participation and creativity is never addressed in either's works, a synthesis of their contributions provides compelling theoretical grounds for considering the impact of exposure to organized, work-like sport participation versus unstructured, play-like sport participation on the development of an individual's creativity.

Sport as play, therefore, is far from a frivolous or superfluous pursuit (at least when considered through the theoretical lenses of Piaget and Vygotsky), and actually helps to comprise an essential stage in the creative development of the child. The purpose of this particular study is not to prove a causal relationship between exposure to different participative sport contexts and the development of creativity. Instead, it tests the theoretical claim that there could be a relationship between the sport experiences of childhood and the creative potential of the adult. There is, in fact, some debate as to whether such a claim can even be made (Kerka, 1999). Albert (1996) contends that the type of creativity displayed in childhood shows little resemblance to the creative forms of adulthood, and that the degree of continuity is overstated. Keegan (1996), however, argues that the creativity of childhood and adulthood reflect an essential continuity in that creative adults represent the accumulation of knowledge, passion, and sense of purpose that lead to the types of higher order expertise required of creative pursuits. For this

reason, he argues, creativity in adulthood cannot be extricated from the formative years of childhood and adolescence. In this respect, adult creativity is thought to be attributable, at least in part, to the environmental conditions a child is exposed to during his/her formative years. For example, Russ, Robins, and Christiano (1999) determined that children who engage in higher quality fantasy play at a young age perform better at creativity tests of divergent thinking over time.

The preceding review of literature has explicated the theoretical basis for considering how informal sport is a form of play, and in turn how play influences creative development. It has also illustrated the conceptual linkages between understanding how differences in the play environment or setting can impact creativity. Clarifying the relationships between organized and unstructured settings and the development of creativity is a step towards legitimating further study examining children's experiences within sport settings. Based on the preceding review of literature, time spent in unstructured, play-like activities is expected to have a significant and positive relationship with creativity, while time spent in structured sport activity is expected to have a significant negative effect on creativity. Therefore, the analysis is driven by the following hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis 1:* The number of hours spent playing informal sports during childhood and adolescence will have a significant positive relationship to creativity in adulthood.
>
> *Hypothesis 2:* The number of hours spent playing organized sports during childhood and adolescence will have a significant negative relationship to creativity in adulthood.

The findings have important implications for the design and implementation of youth sport settings to facilitate child development. Further, the results of this study may

influence parents, educators, and policymakers to provide more child-centered, informal sport and unstructured play opportunities.

METHOD

Participants

The participants in the study were 100 upper-division undergraduates and graduate students at a southwestern university in the United States. The utilization of a student sample derived, in part, from previous findings asserting that, for many individuals, the developmental peak in creative thinking occurs between the ages of 21 and 29, which is a typical age range for upper-division undergraduates and most masters-level graduate students (Runco & Charles, 1997). The sample consisted of 64 males (64%) and 36 females (36%). Participants ranged in age from 19 to 33, but the average age was 22.76 years (*SD* = 2.77). The ethnic composition of the sample was 58% White, 17% Hispanic, 13% Asian/Asian-American, 4% African-American, and 6% of the participants did not provide their ethnicity. In addition, 65% of the participants were pursuing sport-related degrees (e.g., sport management), while 35% were pursuing non-sport-related degrees (e.g., communications, liberal arts, mathematics). In terms of sport backgrounds, 83% of the participants reported playing at least one season of interscholastic sport in high school (with an average of 5.69 seasons; *SD* = 4.72), while 19% reported progressing to play varsity intercollegiate sport (with an average of 0.65 seasons; *SD* = 1.65). When asked to self-identify their type of athletic background, 14% of the participants identified themselves as "elite athletes," 53% as "competitive athletes," 29% as "recreational athletes," and 4% as "non-athletes."

Data Collection

In order to take the initial empirical steps to understand whether a relationship exists between the amount of time spent in different sport and leisure environments during childhood and creativity in adulthood, this study employed two distinct components. After the process of recruiting participants and gaining their consent to participate, the researcher first administered the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA), a 15-minute standardized creativity assessment. Following the completion of the ATTA, participants then completed a 45-minute childhood leisure activities questionnaire pertaining to their sport and leisure participation patterns in both structured and unstructured settings during childhood and adolescence.

To ensure confidentiality during and after the research process, participants did not provide any identifying information on the questionnaires. Their responses to the ATTA and the sport participation questionnaire were matched through marking each with a corresponding number that was pre-labeled by the researcher and randomly distributed to participants. To ensure participant privacy during the process, the physical configuration of the research location was arranged to provide ample space between participants, and participants were given blank paper with which to cover their responses. In addition, the researcher transported the completed creativity assessments and questionnaires in a sealed envelope following each data collection session and stored them in a locked filing cabinet in an on-campus office. A password-protected computer housed any data converted to digital form for analysis.

Measurement

This study employed two instruments to measure the relationship between creativity and childhood leisure and sport participation patterns: the Abbreviated

Torrance Test for Adults (Goff & Torrance, 2002) and a childhood leisure activities questionnaire (modified from Memmert et al., 2010).

Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults

Although there exist numerous definitions and operationalizations of creativity, for the purposes of this empirical inquiry, the "creativity" being assessed is a measure of general creative intelligence (and its subcomponents). This conception of creativity derives from the decades of research conducted by E. Paul Torrance exploring creative reasoning (e.g., Goff & Torrance, 2002). While there may be other creativity measures and indices, none provides as valid and reliable an indication of an adult's general creative aptitude as the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA). Given that the objective of this research is to understand how playing sports in different settings might contribute to an individual's ability to think and reason creatively on a more general scale, the ATTA offers the most appropriate framework through which to assess these relationships.

The ATTA is a shortened version of the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) and consists of three open-ended activities (Goff & Torrance, 2002). The test battery includes measures to quantify both figural and verbal creativity. The ATTA measures four norm-referenced abilities (i.e., fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility), and fifteen criterion-referenced creativity indicators which aggregate to produce an overall creativity index for each participant. The scores for the norm-referenced abilities, criterion-referenced indicators, and creativity indices are calculated by the researcher based on the comprehensive "Guidelines for Scoring" provided in the *Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults Manual* (Goff & Torrance, 2002, pp. 5-25). The development of the precise norms and technical information related to the ATTA are

available in the manual as well (pp. 30-36). With respect to the reliability of the instrument, the ATTA manual reports the Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient for the aggregated raw scores of the instrument as .90 (Goff & Torrance, 2002). In addition, interrater reliability for the ATTA typically ranges from .95 to .99, but is not a concern in this study because one researcher scored all of the assessments. The over 2000 studies utilizing the original TTCT (and the subsequent derivations such as the ATTA) since its initial development in 1966 speak to the validity of the ATTA as the standard instrument for adult creativity assessments. In fact, the instrument has been shown to provide valid, reliable, and objective measures of verbal and figural creativity in adults that correlate with creative performance in the workplace (Althuizen, Wierenga, & Rossiter, 2010; Cramond et al., 2005). The instrument has also been employed in a number of different contexts involving adult college students (e.g., Kharkhurin & Samadpour Motalleebi, 2008) and has been shown to provide acceptable levels of reliability and validity with this population as well.

Childhood Leisure Activities Questionnaire

Participants also completed a questionnaire consisting of context-specific sport and leisure participation rates during childhood (see Appendix D). The first section asked participants for basic demographic information (e.g., age, gender, major.) Next, participants completed sections consisting of context-specific sport participation rates during childhood. These sections were adapted from the framework employed in Memmert, Baker, and Bertsch (2010), which itself drew in part from Helsen, Starkes, and Hodges's (1998) modified deliberate practice questionnaire for sport (based off of Ericsson et al.'s (1993) original deliberate practice questionnaire related to the acquisition of expert performance). The original instrument is comprised of three sections with

unique subscales measuring the sport experiences of participants over the lifespan of their athletic careers. In the original instrument, the first section of the questionnaire is designed to gauge the general sport participation experiences of the participant during the period between the ages of 5 and 14, which is the stage prior to the investment stage of youth sport participation when most young athletes specialize in a certain sport (cf. Côté et al., 2003). This section asked participants to select all the sports that they participated in during this period and to provide information about the quantity in hours per week and months per year of their participation in each organized sport (Memmert et al., 2010). The next two sections required participants to narrow the scope of their responses to focus on the amount of time they spent participating in their primary sport during both their period of highest activity and on a yearly basis. In the fifth section of the questionnaire, participants subdivided their sport participation to reflect the amount of time spent in unstructured, play-like activities during elementary, middle, and high school.

In addition to these sections from the original instrument, newly developed sections asked participants to identify the amount of time spent participating in other leisure and artistic pursuits. These additional sections followed the same structure and format as the original sections. In all of the applicable sections in the questionnaire, however, the age range which participants were asked to consider in all sections was adjusted from the original 5 to 14 age range to ask them to reflect on time spent in the various activities during three periods (elementary school, middle school, and high school) in order to facilitate recall. Based on reports of the amount of hours per week and months per year, the researchers calculated the total number of hours that each participant spent in his/her various sport and leisure pursuits for each period in the participant's childhood, then multiplied these three subtotals by the respective number of years spent

in each period (i.e., five for elementary school, three for middle school, and four for high school). These three totals were then added together to provide an overall estimate of the number of hours a person spent in various sports and leisure contexts during their childhood and adolescence.

One concern in asking participants to recall and estimate time spent in various leisure activities and settings over their lives is the reliability of participant estimates. To investigate this concern, Memmert et al. (2010) re-tested a random subset of their initial sample two months following the administration of the initial test. The re-test of ten participants indicated results that were adequately reliable. In order to validate the self-reported information, Memmert et al. calculated the percent agreement on the items asking when the participants began training (100%) and the number of sports they participated in (88%) during the period from ages 5-14 (cf. Bahrick, Hall, & Berger, 1996). The researchers also analyzed Pearson correlations between key items from the first and second tests, and found correlations above .70 on all items.

In the present study, ten participants were re-tested using the same protocol employed by Memmert et al. (2010). The percent agreement regarding when participants began playing their primary sport (97%) and the number of organized sports they identified participating in (86%) demonstrated adequate reliability. In addition, Pearson correlations between randomly selected items related to hours spent playing various formal and informal sports all exceeded .65. In short, although asking participants to recall time spent in multiple activities and settings is likely to produce inherently imprecise recollections, the consistency and reliability of these recollections is sufficient to support the relative accuracy of the findings.

Data Analysis

Although the Childhood Leisure Activities Questionnaire collected a number of measures, the two primary independent variables calculated for statistical analysis were the amount of time (in hours) spent in unstructured, play-like activities and time (in hours) spent in structured practices, training, and organized games. Total time spent in various other leisure pursuits was also calculated in order to contextualize the findings and provide a more complete picture of the breadth of participant leisure-time pursuits. These other leisure pursuits included doing homework, watching television, playing video games, surfing the internet, reading, hanging out with friends, non-sport physical activity (exercise), playing outdoors, calling or text-messaging friends, participating in drama, doing art, playing music, and doing creative writing.

The dependent variables for analysis derived directly from the ATTA, and included the participant's overall aggregate creativity index and the four norm-referenced creative abilities (viz., fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility). According to the ATTA testing manual (Goff & Torrance, 2002) "fluency" is the ability to produce quantities of relevant ideas, "originality" is the ability to produce unique or uncommon ideas, "elaboration" is the ability to embellish or develop ideas with details, and "flexibility" is the ability to process information in different ways given the same stimulus. As previously noted, the assessment of these creative abilities was guided explicitly through protocol outlined in the ATTA testing manual.

Each of the four norm-referenced creative abilities and the overall creativity index were regressed on variables "time spent playing organized sport" and "time spent playing informal sport." Although extensive demographic data were collected to serve as potential control variables, there was little evidence to suggest an influence from the variables on the creativity of the participants, which speaks to the strength of the ATTA

as a general measure of creativity. The analysis resulted in five simultaneous equations designed to test the relationship between the amount of time spent in the two different sport contexts and the five different representations of creativity. The correlations among errors across equations were captured as an information matrix via joint generalized least-squares, which improved the quality of prediction. Joint generalized least-squares was appropriate in this analysis in order to optimize power and the quality of regression weight estimation across the equations with a relatively small sample size. By estimating the equations for both the four dimensions of creativity and the overall creativity index, it was possible to identify not only the potential differential effects of the amount of time spent in the two settings on a participant's overall creativity, but in the different creative abilities which partially comprise overall creativity. In other words, through joint generalized least squares, it was possible to test whether a particular setting might impact one creativity ability, for example, but not another.

RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in two parts. First, the joint generalized least squares regression models and equations presented in Table 3 report the results of the hypothesis testing, as well as offer a more detailed examination of the influence of sport participation context on different aspects of an individual's creativity. Second, Table 4 and Figures 2, 3, and 4 offer a more nuanced descriptive report of the influence of time spent playing in the two types of sport contexts on the participants scoring in the range of different creativity levels. For a full correlation matrix (with descriptive statistics) for the creativity variables and the leisure time variables addressed in the analysis, see Appendix E.

Table 3: Results of Joint-Generalized Least Squares Regression Models: Unstandardized Coefficients and Standard Errors ($N = 99$)

	Model 1: Fluency		Model 2: Originality		Model 3: Elaboration		Model 4: Flexibility		Model 5: Overall	
	B	*SE* B	B	*SE* B	B	*SE* B	B	*SE* B	B	*SE* B
Hours Spent Playing Organized Sport	-.0001239	.0000835	-.0001741**	.0000608	-.0004012***	.0001138	-.0000565	.0000318	-.0004899*	.0002081
Hours Spent Playing Informal Sport	.0002318**	.0000802	.0001969***	.0000584	.0003644***	.0001092	.0001403***	.0000305	.0007914***	.0001998
Intercept	12.59588	.6198777	6.307256	.4513728	11.58169	.844857	2.35654	.2360222	66.58831	1.545014
p value	.0151*		.0011**		.0003***		< 0.0001***		0.0003***	
R^2	.0781		.1204		.1402		.1769		.1395	

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

According to the results of the joint generalized least squares regressions presented in Tables 3, the null hypothesis that hours spent playing sports in different sport contexts in childhood have no effect on an individual's creativity in adulthood is rejected. As Table 3 demonstrates, all models in which the five measures of creativity (i.e., the overall creativity index and the four norm-referenced creative abilities) were regressed on the total number of hours participants reported playing organized sport and informal sport were significant. In fact, the differential time spent in these two types of settings explained roughly 14% of the variance (R^2 = .1395) in overall participant creativity. Although this R^2 value might appear relatively small in terms of statistical modeling, it explains a relatively high level of variance when considering the holistic nature of an individual's creativity, which beyond leisure participation habits, is comprised of genetic/hereditary factors, schooling and home backgrounds, and myriad other variables.

Table 3 offers a detailed analysis of the precise influence of participation in each of the sport participation settings on the five measures of creativity. Examining first the influence of time spent playing either organized sport or informal sport on the participant's overall creativity, both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are confirmed. The results indicate a significant negative relationship between overall creativity and hours spent playing organized sport (B = -.0004899; $p < .05$), and a significant positive relationship between overall creativity and hours spent playing informal sport (B = .0007914; $p < .001$). Although these unstandardized coefficients may appear small upon first glance, it is important to remember that they are representative of thousands of hours of leisure-time pursuits. In fact, using the unstandardized coefficients, it is possible to calculate the number of hours needed to be spent playing organized or informal sports in order to shift the z-score one standard deviation, or 10.21 points on the overall creativity

index (see Appendix E). Based on simple arithmetic (and the negative direction of the unstandardized coefficient), we can determine that, on average with all else equal, participants needed to spend 2,041.23 hours playing organized sport throughout their childhood and adolescence to see a roughly ten-point deduction in their creativity from the mean (which is a score of approximately 67 on the ATTA). On the other hand, participants needed to spend only 1,263.58 hours playing informal sports to see a roughly ten-point increase in their creativity. Given the ATTA scoring rubric, these standard deviations from the mean can represent the difference between those individuals displaying below-average creativity and those displaying above-average creativity as adults.

While these hour totals may appear substantial initially, when spread over the course of an entire childhood and adolescence, they reflect moderate participation patterns. For example, in order for an adult participant to shift from average creativity (about 67 on the ATTA scale) to relatively high creativity (about 77 on the ATTA scale), the participant needed to spend only -- on average -- 1,263.58 hours playing informal sport, all else equal. If these 1,264 hours are spread over (for heuristic purposes) 12 years, only about 105 hours per year -- or about 2 hours per week -- of playing informal sport is required to see a reasonably dramatic shift.

Table 3 also provides a more precise examination of the results of the regressions with respect to each of the four norm-referenced creative abilities. The results show a consistent influence of sport participation setting in the development of each of the four norm-referenced creative abilities (on average, all else equal). With regard to fluency (the ability to produce quantities of relevant ideas), the number of hours spent playing informal sport was significantly and positively related to participants' abilities to produce higher quantities of relevant ideas ($B = .0002318$; $p < .01$). Using the same arithmetic

referenced in the preceding paragraph 4,314.06 hours were needed to be spent playing informal sport in order to shift the z-score one standard deviation from the mean (these hours equate to an ability to produce 12.83 more relevant ideas than average). In terms of originality (the ability to produce unique or uncommon ideas), hours spent playing organized sport and informal sport were significantly negatively ($B = .0001741$; $p < .01$) and positively ($B = .0001969$; $p < .001$) related, respectively, to participants' abilities to not only generate quantities of ideas, but quantities of unique ideas. In order to shift the z-score one standard deviation (6.06) higher than the mean, participants needed to have spent 5,078.72 hours playing informal sports; to witness the roughly six-point decrease from the mean, participants needed to have spent 5,743.83 hours playing organized sports. Concerning elaboration (the ability to embellish or develop ideas with details), hours spent playing organized sport and informal sport were also significantly negatively ($B = .0004012$; $p < .001$) and positively ($B = .0003644$; $p < .001$) related, respectively, to participants' abilities to develop ideas in greater detail. To produce a 10.62-point shift from the mean, participants needed to have spent 2,492.52 hours in organized sport to see a decrease and/or 2,744.24 hours playing informal sport to see an increase. Finally, total hours spent playing informal sport was significantly positively related ($B = .0001403$; $p < .001$) to participant flexibility, which is the ability to process information in different ways given the same stimulus. As with the previous interpretations, this result signified that for participants to experience a one standard deviation shift in the z-score (or an increase of 2.62 in the number of different ways to process the same stimuli), participants must have spent 7,127.58 hours playing informal sports.

Table 4: Breakdown of Creativity Levels by Sport Participation

Creativity Index	**1-50**	**51-59**	**60-67**	**68-73**	**74-77**	**78-84**	**85+**
Creativity Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Verbal Assessment	Minimal	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High	Substantial
Adult Population (%)	4%	12%	20%	26%	20%	12%	4%
Informal < Organized (%)	4%	26%	32%	22%	9%	4%	3%
Informal > Organized (%)	3%	10%	3%	40%	17%	20%	7%
Informal > Organized Difference (%)	-1%	-16%	-29%	18%	8%	16%	4%
Organized Sport Time (%)	72.1%	69.6%	74.4%	54.8%	56.9%	46.9%	49.8%
Informal Sport Time (%)	27.9%	30.4%	25.6%	45.2%	43.1%	53.1%	50.2%

The descriptive examination of sport participation backgrounds organized by creativity levels further elucidates important patterns in this data. Table 4 presents a breakdown of participant sport participation through the lens of the ATTA categories of creativity (and with respect to the normalized percentages of adults in each category). In addition to providing the normalized breakdown of creativity level, verbal assessment, and the percentage of the adult population scoring in each of these categories according to the ATTA, Table 4 includes five other variables calculated from the data. The number of participants with more hours spent in organized sport and informal sport, respectively, were calculated by subtracting the amount of hours spent playing informal sport for each participant by the amount of hours spent playing organized sport. Participants were then dichotomized based on those with a positive difference (i.e., more hours spent playing informal sport; $n = 30$) and those with a negative difference (i.e., more hours spent playing organized sport; $n = 69$). These variables are represented in Table 4 as "Informal > Organized" and "Informal < Organized," respectively. The percentage differences across the distribution of creativity levels between these two groups was also calculated and reported as the difference for participants with more hours spent in informal sport (see variable "Informal > Organized Difference"). Finally, the total amount of leisure time spent playing sport of any type was calculated for each participant within each creative level and the average percentages of this total sport time spent playing organized sport (see variable "Organized Sport Time") and playing informal sport (see variable "Informal Sport Time") were examined within each creativity level.

For the group of participants who reported spending more time playing organized sports than informal sports ("Informal < Organized"), the percentage of participants with average creativity or lower was higher than (or equal to) the normalized distribution (i.e.,

no difference for Level 1; 14% higher for Level 2; 12% higher for Level 3). The percentage of these participants scoring in the above average or higher creativity levels was also uniformly lower than the normalized distribution for adult participants (i.e., 4% lower for Level 4; 11% lower for Level 5; 8% lower for Level 6; 1% lower for Level 7). Almost the exact opposite was true for participants who reported spending more time playing informal sports than organized sports ("Informal > Organized"). In all but one of the levels, the percentage of these participants in the below average or lower levels was lower than the normalized distribution, while also being higher in the average and above categories. The "Informal > Organized Difference" variable indicated that there was a clear difference in percentage within each creativity level between "Informal > Organized" and "Informal < Organized": 1% lower in Levels 1; 16% lower in Level 2; 29% lower in Level 3; 18% higher in Level 4; 8% higher in Level 5; 16% higher in Level 6; and, 4% higher in Level 7.

Another compelling finding reported in Table 4 illustrates the disparities in "Organized Sport Time" and "Informal Sport Time" based on creativity level. For those individuals with below average creativity, their "Organized Sport Time" was between 70-75%. Participants with scores placing them into average or higher levels of creativity report a much more balanced distribution of time spent in each of the sport settings. Moreover, participants with scores placing them into the two highest levels of creative ability report spending slightly higher "Informal Sport Time."

The importance of balancing leisure time across multiple settings for creative development is also shown through Figures 2, 3, and 4, which provide a percentage breakdown of the amount of time spent in fifteen different leisure activities throughout childhood and adolescence. Again, Figure 2 illustrates that for those participants who scored below average on their overall creativity index, time spent in organized sport

represents a larger overall percentage of their leisure activity (22%), whereas time spent in informal sport and other leisure pursuits is comparatively smaller (10%). In Figure 3, participants with average creativity indices reported a greater balance between time spent in organized sport (17%) relative to informal sport (14%) and the other leisure activities (69%). In Figure 4, those participants with above-average creativity reported an even greater balance between numerous leisure pursuits (71%), while also reported spending slightly less time in organized sport (13%) than informal sport (16%) activities.

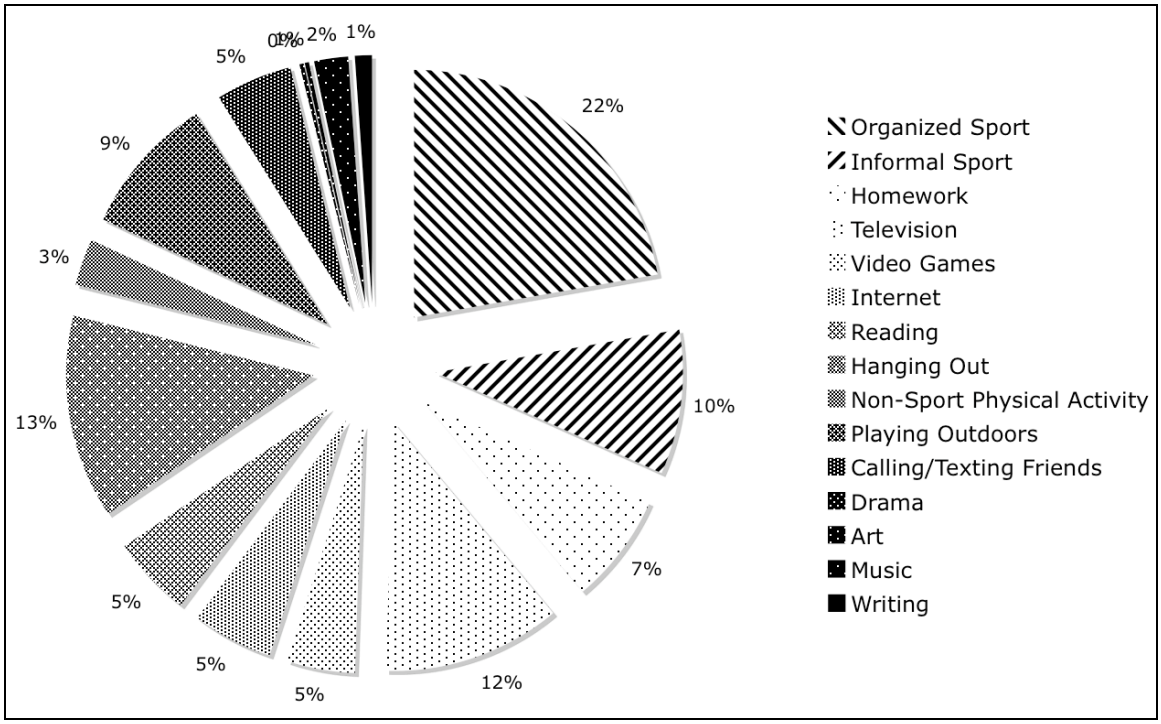

Figure 2: Distribution of Total Leisure Time for Participants with Below-Average Creativity

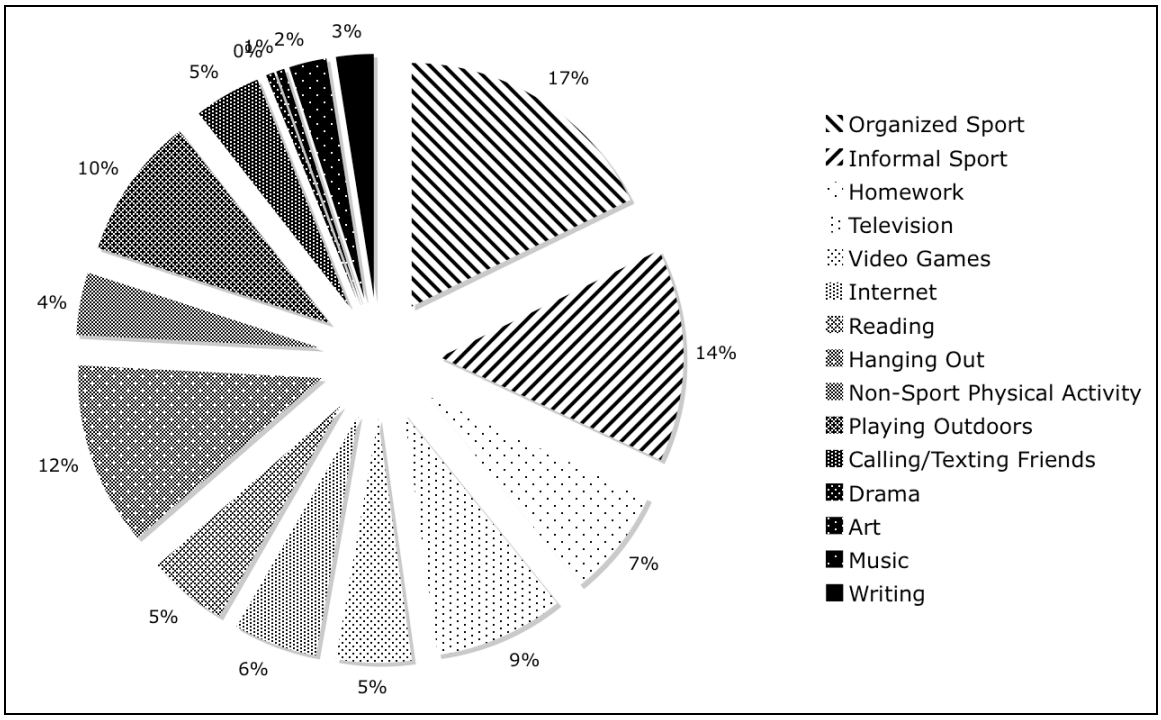

Figure 3: Distribution of Total Leisure Time for Participants with Average Creativity

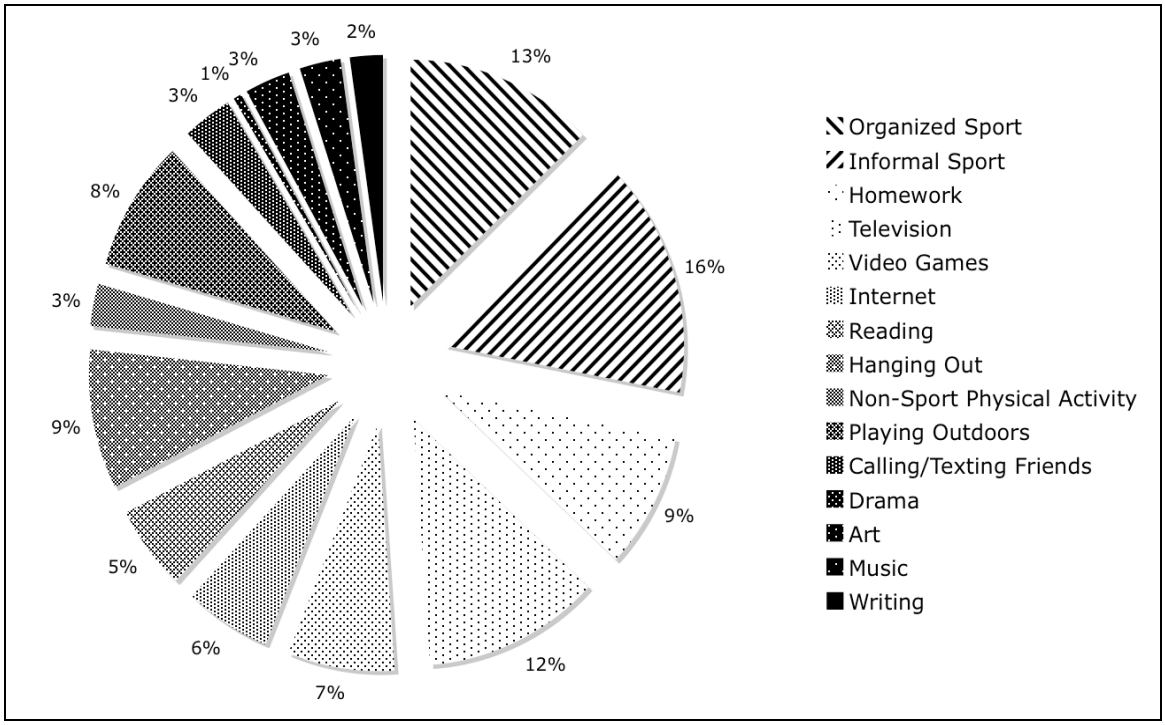

Figure 4: Distribution of Total Leisure Time for Participants with Above-Average Creativity

DISCUSSION

Given the retrospective nature of the data, the distal results that emerge from this study are remarkable. In fact, the results of this analysis offer stark evidence for the importance of reconsidering the significance of the informal sport setting as a critical factor in the sport delivery equation. Not to be lost amidst the number of smaller insights, the two overarching implications to emerge from this analysis are broad in their scope yet significant in their simplicity. First, this study demonstrates that the sport setting can actually alter the types of outcomes that a participant garners in their participation. Specifically, the findings of this study provide support for the notion that informal, unstructured sport settings matter to a child's creative development. Second, this study shows that balancing the time spent in different settings makes a difference in how participants are able to develop. These two major contributions not only provide a solid foundation on which to build future research, but also take initial steps toward proposing a paradigm shift in the field of youth sport development.

Unstructured Settings Matter

In general, the results from Table 3 provide clear evidence for the relationship between playing informal sports in unstructured settings and the development of creativity. Based on the participants in this study, there exists a direct positive relationship between time spent playing informal sports as children and their levels of overall creativity, fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility as adults. The strongest influence from time spent playing informal sports was seen on the development of creative flexibility, which Goff and Torrance (2002) define thusly: "Flexibility is the ability to process information or objects in different ways given the same stimulus. Flexible thinking is especially important when logical approaches fail to produce

satisfactory results" (p. 26). This is not surprising given the characteristics of unstructured sport settings, which foster autonomy and encourage children to experiment in their play without having to fear adult evaluation or adhere to a prescribed technique. In more structured, organized sport settings, children are often not given opportunities to explore their kinesthetic boundaries because adults (coaches and parents) instruct them in the "correct" technique that should always be followed.

Informal sports are not frivolous or counterproductive, as they implicitly can be cast by many adults who view early specialization and organized instruction as the key for children to develop into elite athletes (cf. Côté et al., 2003). The findings from this study provide support for the potential benefits of informal sport played in unstructured settings, at least with respect to developing creativity. Although historically children have supplemented their organized play with informal neighborhood and pickup sports, the opportunities for children to participate in unsupervised play are becoming less frequent. In the instances where neighborhood and pickup sports are unlikely or non-existent, sport providers can take steps to incorporate opportunities for informal play into their programming. This suggestion leads to the second important implication to emerge from this study: balancing organized and informal sports is the key to increased creativity.

Balance is Key

The easy proclamation to make, given the confirmation of this study's hypotheses that overall creativity has a positive relationship with time spent in unstructured settings and a negative relationship with time spent in organized settings, would be that those interested in developing creativity avoid structuring their children's sport environment. From a practical standpoint, it would be very difficult to remove all aspects of structure and organization from a child's youth sport participation. Thankfully, such a drastic

reorganization is not necessary in order to see significant differences. The crux of these findings indicates that those individuals who developed above average creativity did not spurn organized sport for informal sport, but instead struck a greater degree of balance between participation in the two settings. As Table 4 shows, those participants with the lowest general creativity spent nearly three-quarters of their total sport time playing organized sports; however, those with the highest levels of creative spent roughly equal time in both settings. Similarly, Figures 2 and 4 illustrate that those participants with below-average creativity spent nearly a quarter of their total leisure time playing organized sports, while spending only one-tenth of that time playing informal sports. Participants with above-average creativity, on the other hand, spent slightly more of their overall leisure time playing informal sports (16%) than organized sports (13%).

These findings corroborate previous research that highlights the importance of balancing the amount of deliberate practice time with deliberate play (Côté et al., 2007). Spending a more balanced amount of time in the two settings has even been shown to increase the sport-specific creativity of elite athletes (Memmert et al, 2010). Combined with Green's (1997) findings demonstrating the effectiveness of a modified youth sport program which infused less-structured play opportunities into an organized sport framework, the case for promoting youth sport programming which incorporates both organized and informal play is clear. Moreover, outcomes such as creativity are possible through simply redistributing practice and game time to allow for more varied types of settings and experiences, and do not require a complete re-imagining of entrenched youth sport development models.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of empirical precedent for these research questions, the results offer significant hope for developing a line of research exploring the relationships between sport, creativity, and context. In spite of the relative strength of the results, however, there are a number of limitations to the findings reflected in the present analysis. First and foremost, the structure of the data and analysis do not allow for testing whether a causal relationship exists between time spent in different sport participation settings and the development of creativity in children. At this stage, the most that can be asserted is that there is a relationship between the two; it is unclear whether creative people self-select out of organized sports or less creative people self-select into it. This area of research would therefore benefit from researchers with the resources to conduct experimental studies in which children can be randomly assigned to participate in control or experimental groups exposed to different sport settings.

Second, while this study explores the relationship between participation in organized and unstructured sport settings and creativity, it remains inconclusive whether the findings are unique to sport as a leisure pursuit, or whether the same types of differences might be seen with respect to participating in organized and unstructured settings in other leisure pursuits as well. For example, would the same results emerge from an analysis of time spent playing music in organized settings versus unstructured settings? Future research can test the extent to which the findings of this study speak to a sport-specific phenomenon or a broader pattern in many organized and unstructured leisure environments.

Third, the retrospective nature of the data collection presented inherent limitations with regard to the reliability of participant recall and responses. In spite of the aforementioned test-retest reliability of a sub-sample of the participant responses, the

accuracy of participant recollections of childhood activities does not yield an ideal representation of childhood leisure experiences. The researcher assumption in structuring the data collection in this manner was that the relative differences between time spent in different activities would still be conveyed with accuracy, even if the specific hours spent per week and month may not have been exactly the same as their childhood reality. In the future, an experimental study with children like the one mentioned to address the first limitation would also minimize reliability concerns through the contemporaneous collection of data as children experience different leisure activities and settings.

Finally, the sample in this study was limited by a number of demographic constraints. Although the demographic distribution reflected a reasonably accurate gender, ethnic, and age representation for the university setting from which participants were sampled, this distribution is not representative of the general young adult population. College students, on the whole, would be expected to possess above average intelligence quotients compared to a typical young adult, which could also impact their expected levels of creativity, although research into this relationship is inconclusive (e.g., Preckel, Holling, & Wiese, 2006). If anything, the potentially higher levels of expected creativity would indicate that the findings in this study are more conservative based on a restricted range. In addition, the temporal demands associated with study participation (~ 1 hour) precluded a more diverse sampling of participants and often necessitated that the researcher work through convenience and snowball sampling as opposed to random sampling. This reality led to a higher percentage of participants pursuing sport-related degrees with, presumably, more extensive sport backgrounds. Each of these issues increased the limitations of the study's findings, but could be ameliorated through conducting future experimental studies that build off the foundation laid in this research.

CONCLUSION

From both an elite-oriented sport development and mass-oriented sport-for-development perspective, there is evidence in these findings to support providing youth sport participants with programming that transcends organized sport alone. Although only a small initial step toward an empirical understanding of the relationship between childhood sport participation settings and the development of creativity, the distal results reported in this study demonstrate the potential benefits of a paradigm shift toward more balanced, multi-setting youth sport development models. At present, many youth sport programs are becoming increasingly homogenized in their adoption of professional models of development emphasizing a structuring and organization of the youth sport environment at earlier and earlier ages. While a structured, organized approach may seem intuitive to adults (parents, coaches, and policymakers) whose only current points of reference are the professional sports they watch and consume, this study indicates that a more balanced distribution of time in both organized and unstructured sport environments may foster important developmental benefits.

Youth sport programs endeavoring to instantiate positive developmental outcomes in children can benefit from an empirical understanding of the way sport settings alter what outcomes may actually be deliverable. Organized sport offers a forum for certain developmental outcomes, but like any setting, it is naturally limited in what it can facilitate, particularly with respect to less traditional outcomes like creativity. As the results of this study show, the ability of a monolithic youth sport landscape to generate outcomes such as creativity is in doubt unless the time spent in organized, structured sport settings is balanced by allowing children opportunities for informal, unstructured sport participation. However, as the nurturance of creativity continues to emerge as an important policy issue, childhood sport participation drawing from both organized and

informal sport can play an important role in helping to foster creative development in children. This research is not a call to revolution; it is the acknowledgement that, at least with respect to developing creativity through sport, a little balance can go a long way.

Chapter 5: Overall Discussion

The three studies presented in this dissertation inform a broader discussion about the past, present, and future role of understanding settings within the research and practice of sport management. As the first study demonstrated, the founders of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) set out to realize an ideal future in which the management of sport was only one part of a broader vision for the field -- one that included exercise, dance, and play, and which embraced the members' roots in physical education. In fact, the original name proposed for the organization was the North American Society for Sport and Physical Activity Management. Almost immediately, however, the organization became untethered from this broad interpretation of sport management as comprised of many domains and contexts. Instead, the organization quickly became the preeminent academic vehicle for the study of professional and college sport, much to the exclusion of research and interest in other areas like participant-based sport.

The historical inquiry into this process revealed the emphasis on commercial sport and apparent lack of concern for the management of the more playful forms of human movement stemmed primarily from a need of the new organization to position itself and its field in a sustainable niche. While the founders may have had every intention of carrying out the broadly defined vision for NASSM, they also needed to differentiate sport management from existing fields and to forge a unique identity that would appeal to the biggest available market. Since other organizations had effectively established their claims to the areas of play, dance, exercise, physical education, and recreational sport,

emphasizing commercial sport may have been the shrewdest positioning strategy available at the time.

A quarter-century later, NASSM has established sport management as a recognized and popular field of study. The focus on commercial sport that helped to position the field for its success, however, has also limited the ability of sport management to make meaningful contributions in the myriad other sport and physical activity contexts. Moreover, with NASSM now dominating much of the academic study of sport management, the conditions that necessitated the initial cultivation of that commercial sport niche no longer exist. Yet, sport management continues to emphasize commercial sport. In this sense, the field may be a victim of its own success, as the initial need to study commercial sport became instantiated as the norm for the organization over time. As a result of the strong association with this limited context, the field may have created a self-perpetuating cycle wherein the initial focus attracted scholars with a strong interest in this area, who then attracted and produced more students and scholars with this shared interest over multiple generations until the field became even more singular in its commercial sport focus.

Recently, the field has witnessed the emergence of small enclaves of scholars who express renewed interest in the management of participant-centered sport. In fact, at the 2011 NASSM conference in London, Ontario, a symposium on the study of participant sport attracted a standing-room-only crowd. What began as an interest that was fundamental to the organization's vision is now framed as mold-breaking, and this is directly attributable to the entrenched interests and worldviews of the organization -- a phenomenon similar to what Scott and Chalip (2005) refer to as "the tether of tradition." With the small levels of renewed interest offering hope for returning sport management to the broader scope that many of the founders initially envisioned, the essential question

for the field becomes "How do we create more value for studying sport beyond a commercial professional or college context for the field of sport management?" Understanding the role of settings in sport management (specifically sport development) is one way to begin to show the value of a broader scope for the field.

A small portion of the renewed value of studying broader contexts is demonstrated through the findings of the second and third studies. In popular culture and academic discourse, sport is often conceptualized as a monolithic institution; that is, the organized form of sport is thought to provide all who participate in it with the same culturally-prescribed experiences and outcomes. The results of the studies presented in this dissertation, however, extend the limited previous findings that playing sport in different settings can produce varied experiences and outcomes (e.g., Chalip et al., 1984). In this sense, playing sports can be a far more diverse, multidimensional, and interactive process than it is often assumed to be. Nevertheless, old adages like "sports build character" still permeate the culture of sport, and although seemingly innocuous (if not inspirational), they represent a fundamental challenge of sport managers to negotiate the entrenched mythology of sport in order to provide participants with desired experiential and developmental outcomes. Rather than assume that sport participation naturally facilitates personal and social development, sport managers have the responsibility to understand when, how, and why these outcomes occur, and to leverage this understanding to create opportunities for growth.

In the phenomenological study, the lived experiences of youth sport participants show that the differences between settings that are often reinforced in academic discourse are much less dramatic in reality, and that the understanding that emerges from both their differences and their integration has the potential to improve current sport development models. As this study attests, different contexts can provide a range of benefits to

participants whether they are experienced separately or together, but the truly transformative notion is that neither really operates in isolation for the participants, regardless of how sport participation has been framed in the past.

In the creativity study, the manner in which different settings work together (or not) is further explicated with regard to the creative development of sport participants. The results of this study suggest that sport settings may work better as complements rather than competitors, at least for developing creativity. What is particularly salient in the findings, however, is that those participants with higher creativity spent roughly equal amounts of time playing in both organized and unstructured sport settings as children. With small changes to the amount of time spent playing in different settings (e.g., shifting from spending 70% of one's time playing organized sports and 30% playing informal sports to spending roughly the same time in each), new positive outcomes are possible. In this sense, neither organized sports nor informal sports needs to be discarded for the other in order to promote significantly different outcomes.

The implications to emerge from this dissertation have the most traction for impacting the field of sport management within the aforementioned area of sport development. Even at its relatively nascent epistemological stage (particularly in the United States), sport development has already contributed to the understanding of how to develop athletes and coaches more efficiently and effectively through conceptualizing the process as a system that can be coordinated and managed. In addition to systematizing elite athlete development, sport development also strives to understand how to effectively manage mass participation; in fact, advances in the field of sport development have demonstrated the importance of connecting elite development and mass participation, as the latter serves as the foundation for the pyramid model of sport development (Green, 2005). Rather than study these programming elements in isolation, sport development

endeavors to understand the importance of providing athletes pathways to transition from mass participation to elite development (or vice versa) through creating inter-organizational linkages and intra-organizational systems for recruiting, retaining, and advancing athletes.

In this respect, the results of the phenomenological study contribute to the sport development literature by asserting the importance of unstructured settings in the lived experiences of youth athletes, some of whom will likely advance to elite levels of performance. In spite of playing sports in a successful, sport-centric community, the experiences of the boys in this study speak directly to the critical role that unstructured sport settings can play in framing and supporting the organized component of sport development. For some of the boys, playing informal sports in unstructured settings served as a developmental pathway to transition into the organized sport development system. Many of the boys also found that the experience of playing in an unstructured setting changed the manner in which they appreciated organized sport, from making them more receptive to adult instruction to preventing them from burning out on the physical and psychological demands of elite organized sport. Moreover, the opportunity to practice and hone their skills in an unstructured settings also helped the boys to feel prepared for future success, be it on the Little League field or in the high school football stadium. Expanding sport development research to situate the experiences of athletes in unstructured settings as an integral aspect of their sport delivery equation has the potential to yield meaningful insights about the effectiveness of sport development systems.

While the implications from this dissertation can inform the broader research into systems for recruiting, retaining, and advancing athletes as in the phenomenological study, they also contribute to understanding the influence that settings have on "sport-for-

development" programs and policies. Within the study of sport-for-development, scholars seek to understand and harness the potential that sport holds for instantiating participants with desirable developmental benefits through the design and implementation of programs. Whether utilizing sport as a "hook" to educate or influence people, sport as a tool for social change, or sport as an intervention for at-risk populations, sport-for-development aims to leverage the positive outcomes of sport to improve people's lives (Green, 2008). As the results of the third study indicate, the setting in which sport participation occurs can impact the developmental outcomes accrued by participants. In this case, unstructured sport settings were shown to have a direct relationship to an individual's general levels of creativity: spending more time playing sports in unstructured settings during childhood related to higher overall creativity as adults for the participant in the sample. The potential for sport played in different settings to produce different developmental outcomes is an important inference to be drawn from these results for sport-for-development research and programming.

The findings from this third study challenge the implicit assumption that sport participation naturally produces universal developmental outcomes (e.g., building character, leadership, instilling the value of hard work, etc.). In fact, based on these findings, some shortcomings in sport-for-development programs could stem, in part, from asking sport to accomplish too much with too little manipulation of the context for participants. Considering how the manipulation of the setting influences the outcomes of sport participation offers an empowering framework for sport managers to take a more direct role in the sport delivery equation. Such an ontological shift could spawn innumerable lines of research based on understanding the precise impact of different aspects of the sport participation experience on measurable developmental outcomes. Implicit developmental assumptions about sport participation no longer have to be left to

chance; disaggregating the developmental components of sport can allow them to become more manageable. Moreover, sport managers can begin to translate the nebulous (and often unrealistic) mythology associated with sport participation outcomes into clearly defined and measurable constructs.

The preceding three studies each individually provide evidence for reconsidering how unstructured sport settings can contribute within a broader sport development model. Combined, however, they elucidate the present shortcomings of the organized sport-centric model of development that currently pervades the United States in both research and practice. As the overall findings of this dissertation attest, unstructured settings -- eschewed by sport management during its efforts to establish itself as field -- can meaningfully impact how sport fits into people's lives, both for recreational and elite athletes. If sport management is to benefit a range of populations and to ultimately make a discernible impact on society as a whole, understanding settings offers a relatively untapped means to do so. In reality, the narrow scope of sport management paints an incomplete picture of the role of sport in people's lives, and in so doing, undervalues the capacity of sport -- both from a market standpoint and in its potential contribution to the betterment of society.

In summary, this dissertation presents merely a glimpse at the manner in which researchers and practitioners can begin to disentangle the different experiences and outcomes that sport fosters when played in different settings. Perhaps the more significant contribution of this work to the overall canon of sport management, however, is the evidence it provides for the effectiveness of an integrative sport development paradigm. Rather than differentiating the experiences and outcomes from participation in organized and unstructured settings into taxonomies, the studies in this dissertation consider the implications that emerge from the synthesis of these settings. Although the

first study illustrates the movement away from unstructured settings by the field of sport management, the second and third studies offer insights about the significance of not only reconsidering the role of unstructured sport settings, but reconsidering how participation in unstructured settings complements organized sport participation in the lives of participants. For all its broader implications and nuances, however, this work ultimately reinforces one simple idea: context matters.

Appendix A: Delphi Study Research Questions (Rounds 1 and 2)

Below are the initial seven questions we asked you to consider (with Round 2 probes indented beneath each original question):

Q1. Please describe your role and experiences during the formation of NASSM? How did you become involved and how do you feel you contributed to the process?

Q2. What were the domains (research and practical) identified as important to the developing field of sport management during the initial deliberations about NASSM?

> During the early meetings related to the founding of NASSM, what was your opinion about the role of domains such as "dance" and "play" in the future of sport management? Has your opinion changed over time?
>
> To what do you attribute the comparative lack of scholarly attention to these areas within contemporary sport management? Is there a place for "dance" and "play" in sport management?

Q3. What conflicts arose during the early discussions about the scope of NASSM? Did any areas of disputation yield the inclusion of areas of study that you felt should not be included or the exclusion of areas you felt should have been included?

> How successful do you believe NASSM has been in navigating these concerns (gender/representativeness, balancing theory and practice, establishing sport management as a unique field) over the course of its development?
>
> If you knew then what you know now, are there any areas of present concern that you would have worked harder to address during the formative stages?
>
> How do you respond to the belief of at least one of you that sport management has "dropped the ball" with respect to managing sport and physical activity in the public and education sectors?

Q4. What did you see as the most important research foci in sport management originally? Has this changed over the years? Do you see it shifting in the future?

To what extent do you view the development of unique, "evolving" theory based on "rigorous research studies" as a concern of sport management researchers and educators?

During the initial deliberations about NASSM, was this an area of discussion for the group?

What would you identify as the negative repercussions of not having this type of theory guiding the field?

There is a sense that the research foci have broadened, and yet the contexts which sport managers study seem to have, at the same time, narrowed to concentrate predominantly on entertainment sport contexts. Do you perceive this to be the case? If so, is this a significant issue in your mind?

Q5. What did you see as the most critical areas for preparing students to work in the field of sport management originally? Has this changed over the years? Do you see it shifting in the future?

Has the "sport management student" changed over the years, in your opinion? Was the sport management student during the early years of NASSM different from the sport management student of today? If so, how has the field responded/adapted?

In your opinion, does the context or sector in which a student seeks employment change the types of skills and attributes he or she needs to be successful? Does a sport manager working in grassroots sport development with a non-profit organization need different training than a student planning on entering professional sport ticket sales? If so, how does the field negotiate these differences?

Q6. Rate or rank the importance of the following domains to the field of sport management: entertainment-based sport, organized sport, informal sport, play. Justify your rankings.

In your opinion, what criteria do you believe should be used to determine what is "important" to sport? Profit, personal growth, or another criteria altogether?

Has your view on the role of sport society changed since the early years of NASSM? If so, how? Why?

Q7. How has the development of sport management compared with your initial vision of NASSM and the field? Has anything surprised you? Disappointed you? Pleased you?

The three primary concerns expressed in response to this question each merit significant consideration. First, how do you see sport management, as a field, addressing the issue of quantity versus quality with regard to students?

Second, what was your initial vision for the intellectual climate of NASSM, and what would you like to see maintained, changed, or avoided over the coming years with respect to sport management scholarship?

Finally, what responsibility do you see for sport management to take a greater role in the management of participant sport? Given its profit-making potential and dominance of the sport market share, why has participant sport been so overlooked within sport management as opposed to, say, entertainment sport?

Appendix B: Delphi Study List of Statements of Consent and Descriptive Statistics (Round 3)

In this round, panelists were presented with some of the statements of consensus that emerged from the first two rounds. For each of the statements, panelists indicated their level of agreement based on the following five-point Likert scale:

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neutral 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree

Additionally, panelists were provided with space beneath each item within which to supplement their rating with additional comments or clarifications.

Item (1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly Agree)	***Mean* (*SD*)**
1. At the start of NASSM, it was important to ensure a broad range of domains for sport management scholars to study.	4.50 (.76)
2. At the start of NASSM, It was necessary to differentiate sport management (and NASSM) from other fields (e.g., physical education, recreation) and organizations.	4.25 (.71)
3. A key driving force in the founding of NASSM was the creation of a distinctive discipline.	4.63 (.74)
4. At the start of NASSM, there were few outlets for research about the management of professional and college sport.	4.88 (.35)
5. At the start of NASSM, there were few outlets for research on the management of participant sport.	4.75 (.46)
6. The emphasis on professional and college sport in the field of sport management has been driven by market demands, including student demand.	3.88 (.99)
7. The field of sport management is narrower in the types of sport contexts its scholars study than the original vision for the organization (viz., the NASSM constitution, and statement of purpose therein).	4.14 (.90)
8. The field of sport management has made significant strides in elaborating the nuances of different realms of study (e.g., marketing, finance, law, management) within the context of entertainment/spectator sport.	4.13 (1.36)
9. NASSM originally envisioned participant-based sport as a core domain of sport management.	3.43 (1.40)
10. Informal sport and play are not under the current purview of sport management scholarship.	4.25 (1.16)
11. NASSM founders were concerned with balancing theory and practice in the new organization.	4.88 (.35)
12. The field of sport management has done a good job of balancing theory and practice.	3.57 (.79)

13. The field of sport management has done a good job of developing unique theories.	2.50 (1.20)
14. The NASSM organization has benefited from the different "worldviews" of both its U.S. and Canadian members.	4.71 (.49)
15. Sport management students are entering the field with the requisite knowledge and skills to succeed.	3.33 (.52)
16. Sport management is proceeding down a path that is (in a general sense) adequately meeting the needs of society on the whole.	3.57 (.98)

Appendix C: Phenomenology Study Interview Questions

1. One of the best parts of being a kid is all the time that you get to spend playing with your friends. Can you tell me about a time when you and your friends played sports together?

2. Describe a time when you were playing sports and you thought, "Man, I am having so much fun that I don't want this to end"?

3. Do you have a favorite memory of a time that you were playing sports? Can you describe it to me?

4. What sports are you playing these days? Are these the sports you have always played? Why or why not?

5. Where are you playing sports? In a league? In your neighborhood?

6. How does it feel different when you are playing sports in a league? Can you describe your last game to me? Like, what you did before you got to the field, what you did when you got there, etc.?

7. Who is in charge when you are playing sports with your friends? How do you settle arguments and disagreements? What about when you are playing on a team in a league?

8. How do you feel when you win a game with your team in the league? How do you feel when you lose? How do you feel if you are just playing with your friends in the neighborhood?

9. Do you ever feel free to be silly or goofy when you are playing sports? Tell me about a time when you did.

10. What is your favorite part about playing sports with your friends in the league? In the neighborhood?

11. If you could change one thing related to playing sports in your life, what would it be?

Appendix D: Creativity Study Childhood Leisure Activities Questionnaire

Test ID # _____

Childhood Leisure Activities Questionnaire

In an effort to learn more about the relationship between leisure activities and creativity, we are interested in exploring your childhood and adolescent leisure experiences. Participation is voluntarily, and the information you provide will be kept confidential. Once the data is collected, you will be given the opportunity to request your score on the creativity inventory if it is of interest to you. In order to match you to your score while maintaining anonymity, you must record the "Test ID #" from the top right-hand corner of this page and provide it along with your request. Whether you request this information or not, your responses will be completely anonymous throughout the research process. This should allow you to mark each of your responses openly and honestly. If you have any questions, please ask the person proctoring.

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age: _____ Gender (circle one): Male / Female Ethnicity: _____

Major: _____

Academic Standing (circle one): Lower-Division Upper-Division Grad Student

Current GPA (approximate): _____

Did you play JV/varsity sports in high school? Y / N

If so, how many seasons (count each season for each sport separately)? _____

What sports did you play in high school? _____

Did/Do you play varsity sports in college? Y / N

If so, how many seasons (count each season for each sport separately)? _____

What sports did/do you play in college? _____

Choose from the following list the term that best describes your sport participation background (circle one):

Elite Athlete Competitive Athlete Recreational Athlete Non-Athlete

PART II: ORGANIZED SPORTS PARTICIPATION BACKGROUND

In the following section, we would like you to tell us about your background playing organized sports. For the purposes of this study, "organized sports' refers to when you took part in a structured training session or game with an adult/coach present, usually as a part of a league or sport organization. Choosing from the list provided, please estimate your participation for the various sports in number of hours per week and number of months per years during elementary school, middle school, and high school. If you did not participate in a listed sport, you may leave the spaces blank. If there are any organized sports you participated in that are not provided on the list, you may add them in the blank spaces below the list and follow the same steps as the listed sports. IF YOU DID NOT PLAY ORGANIZED SPORTS, SKIP THIS QUESTION.

Activity	Hours per Week (Months per Year) Elementary School	Middle School	High School
EX. BASKETBALL	4(3)	6(4)	14 (8)
BASEBALL/TEE BALL/SOFTBALL			
BASKETBALL			
FOOTBALL			
GOLF			
GYMNASTICS			
HOCKEY (ICE/ROLLER/FIELD)			
LACROSSE			
TRACK & FIELD			
SOCCER			
SWIMMING & DIVING			

TENNIS	_____	_____	_____
VOLLEYBALL	_____	_____	_____
WRESTLING	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

PART III: PRIMARY SPORT INVOLVEMENT

In this section, we would like you to provide more detailed information about your experience participating in your primary sport. For the purposes of this study, your primary sport is simply the sport that you spent the most time participating in during childhood, and the sport that you ended up playing at the highest level. Typically, the sport that you spend the most time playing as a child ends up being the sport you reach the highest level of participation in, but not always. For each of the activities listed, you are to answer with the amount of time spent RELATED TO YOUR PRIMARY SPORT. IF YOU DID NOT PLAY ORGANIZED SPORTS, SKIP THIS QUESTION.

Primary Sport _____

At what age did you begin playing this sport? _____
At what age were you most active in the sport (from a time standpoint)? _____
At what age did you stop? _____

PROVIDE INFORMATION FROM THE AGE WHEN YOU WERE MOST ACTIVE

Primary Sport Activity	Hours per Week	Months per Year
Individual Practice		
WEIGHT TRAINING	_____	_____
FITNESS TRAINING	_____	_____
FILM/GAME ANALYSIS	_____	_____
SKILL DEVELOPMENT	_____	_____
INDIVIDUAL COACHING/INSTRUCTION	_____	_____
Team Practice		
WEIGHT TRAINING	_____	_____
FITNESS TRAINING	_____	_____
FILM/GAME ANALYSIS	_____	_____
SKILL DEVELOPMENT	_____	_____

TACTICAL TRAINING _____ _____
GAME PLANNING _____ _____
TRAVEL TIME _____ _____

Organized Competition
GAME WARM-UP _____ _____
PLAYING ACTUAL GAME _____ _____
TRAVEL TIME _____ _____

Primary Sport-Related Activities
READING ABOUT SPORTS _____ _____
WATCHING SPORTS ON TV _____ _____
WATCHING SPORTS IN PERSON _____ _____
PLAYING WITH FRIENDS (UNSTRUCTURED) _____ _____
STUDYING ABOUT SPORT _____ _____
PLAYING SPORT-RELATED VIDEO GAMES _____ _____

PART IV: YEARLY INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SPORT

In this section we would like you to again consider only your main (or primary) sport. For each year of age please record the number of hours per week and months per year that you would have been involved in your main sport. When estimating the time spent in each activity, please consider all training and competition activities. IF YOU DID NOT PLAY ORGANIZED SPORTS, SKIP THIS QUESTION.

AGE	HOURS/WEEK	MONTHS/YEAR
5 YEARS OLD		
6 YEARS OLD		
7 YEARS OLD		
8 YEARS OLD		
9 YEARS OLD		
10 YEARS OLD		
11 YEARS OLD		
12 YEARS OLD		
13 YEARS OLD		
14 YEARS OLD		
15 YEARS OLD		
16 YEARS OLD		
17 YEARS OLD		
18 YEARS OLD		
19 YEARS OLD		

20 YEARS OLD		
21 YEARS OLD		
22 YEARS OLD		
23 YEARS OLD		
24 YEARS OLD		
25 YEARS OLD		
26 YEARS OLD		
27 YEARS OLD		
28 YEARS OLD		

PART V: UNSTRUCTURED SPORT PARTICIPATION BACKGROUND

In the following section, we would like you to tell us about your background playing unstructured sports. For the purposes of this study, "unstructured sports" means that you were playing pickup with your friends or neighbors without adult/coach instruction or presence. For example, unstructured sports could be the times when you played football in the backyard with your siblings and neighborhood kids, or when you went to "open gym" to play pickup basketball at the local rec center. In the spaces provided, please list any unstructured sports you participated in, and estimate your participation for the various sports in number of hours per week and number of months per years during elementary school, middle school, and high school. Feel free to list anything that you believe would classify as an unstructured sport from skateboarding to kickball. What is most important is not what the researchers define as "sport" but what you recall playing, so please list anything that comes to mind - there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

	Hours per Week (Months per Year)		
Activity	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
EX. SKATEBOARDING	2(12)	6(8)	6(10)
EX. PICKUP BASKETBALL/HORSE	4(9)	6(12)	3(9)
EX. KICKBALL	2(6)	1(3)	

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

PART VI: TIME SPENT IN NON-SPORT ACTIVITIES

We would also like you to know about the types of non-sport activities you did during your childhood and adolescence. Listed are common daily activities that you may have participated in. If you did any of these activities, please estimate your participation for each applicable activity in number of hours per week and number of months per years during elementary school, middle school, and high school. At the bottom of the list, there are blank spaces for you to write in any activities that you did which may not be listed.

	Hours per Week (Months per Year)		
Activity	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
DOING HOMEWORK	_____	_____	_____
WATCHING TELEVISION	_____	_____	_____
PLAYING VIDEO GAMES	_____	_____	_____
SURFING THE INTERNET	_____	_____	_____
READING	_____	_____	_____
HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS	_____	_____	_____
NON-SPORT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	_____	_____	_____

PLAYING OUTDOORS	_____	_____	_____
CALLING/TEXTING/IM-ING FRIENDS	_____	_____	_____
DRAMA	_____	_____	_____
ART	_____	_____	_____
MUSIC	_____	_____	_____
WRITING	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

PART VII: PRIMARY MUSIC/ART INVOLVEMENT

In this section, we would like you to provide more detailed information about your experience participating in music or the arts. For the purposes of this study, this is simply the musical instrument or artistic outlet that you spent the most time participating in during childhood, and the activity that you ended up doing at the highest level. For each of the activities listed, you are to answer with the amount of time spent RELATED TO YOUR PRIMARY ARTISTIC ACTIVITY. FEEL FREE TO ADD ACTIVITIES NOT ALREADY LISTED. IF YOU DID NOT PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OR PRACTICE ART DURING AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF YOUR CHILDHOOD, SKIP THIS QUESTION.

Primary Instrument/Activity _____

At what age did you begin playing/doing this activity? _____
At what age were you most active (from a time standpoint)? _____
At what age did you stop? _____

PROVIDE INFORMATION FROM THE AGE WHEN YOU WERE MOST ACTIVE

Primary Artistic Activity	Hours per Week	Months per Year
Individual Practice		

SKILL DEVELOPMENT _____ _____
INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

Group/Band Practice

SKILL DEVELOPMENT _____ _____
REHEARSING FOR PERFORMANCE _____ _____
TRAVEL TIME _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

Performance/Competition

WARM-UP _____ _____
PERFORMANCE _____ _____
TRAVEL TIME _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

Related Activities

READING ABOUT MUSIC/ART _____ _____
WATCHING/LISTENING TO MUSIC _____ _____
VISITING GALLERIES/PERFORMANCES _____ _____
JAMMING WITH FRIENDS (UNSTRUCTURED) _____ _____
STUDYING ABOUT MUSIC/ART _____ _____

PART VIII: YEARLY INVOLVEMENT WITH PRIMARY ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

In this section we would like you to again consider only your main (or primary) artistic activity. For each year of age please record the number of hours per week and months per year that you would have been involved in the activity. When estimating the time spent in each activity, please consider all training and performance activities. IF YOU DID NOT PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OR PRACTICE ART DURING AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF YOUR CHILDHOOD, SKIP THIS QUESTION.

AGE	HOURS/WEEK	MONTHS/YEAR
5 YEARS OLD		
6 YEARS OLD		
7 YEARS OLD		
8 YEARS OLD		
9 YEARS OLD		

10 YEARS OLD		
11 YEARS OLD		
12 YEARS OLD		
13 YEARS OLD		
14 YEARS OLD		
15 YEARS OLD		
16 YEARS OLD		
17 YEARS OLD		
18 YEARS OLD		
19 YEARS OLD		
20 YEARS OLD		
21 YEARS OLD		
22 YEARS OLD		
23 YEARS OLD		
24 YEARS OLD		
25 YEARS OLD		
26 YEARS OLD		
27 YEARS OLD		
28 YEARS OLD		

Appendix E: Creativity Study Correlation Matrix of Variables Included in Analysis

	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Creativity Indices																					
1. Overall Creativity Index	66.95	10.21	1.00																		
2. Creative Fluency	12.83	3.96	0.80	1.00																	
3. Creative Originality	6.06	2.95	0.81	0.75	1.00																
4. Creative Elaboration	10.62	5.59	0.75	0.58	0.56	1.00															
5. Creative Flexibility	2.62	1.60	0.72	0.57	0.50	0.62	1.00														
Time Spent (in Hours)...																					
6. Playing Organized Sport	6445.54	5156.61	-0.06	-0.02	-0.14	-0.21	0.04	1.00													
7. Playing Informal Sport	4446.67	5371.26	0.30	0.24	0.22	0.18	0.39	0.46	1.00												
8. Doing Homework	2678.47	2793.44	0.24	0.17	0.09	0.23	0.21	0.29	0.28	1.00											
9. Watching Television	3825.29	2530.08	0.19	0.16	0.21	0.11	0.18	0.06	0.39	0.10	1.00										
10. Playing Video Games	1922.42	2361.92	0.25	0.18	0.28	0.09	0.23	-0.02	0.36	0.05	0.61	1.00									
11. Surfing Internet	1973.29	1708.23	0.16	0.11	0.14	0.11	0.02	-0.09	0.09	0.12	0.39	0.35	1.00								
12. Reading	1854.34	1701.13	0.17	0.16	0.11	0.07	0.10	0.23	0.21	0.37	0.29	0.15	0.22	1.00							
13. Hanging Out with Friends	4230.47	2860.06	0.02	0.08	-0.02	-0.04	0.09	0.09	0.14	0.03	0.18	0.24	0.21	0.26	1.00						
14. Non-Sport Physical Activity	1222.75	1726.87	0.11	0.06	0.07	0.19	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.29	0.01	0.07	-0.10	0.32	0.19	1.00					
15. Playing Outdoors	3260.36	2858.23	0.13	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.10	0.22	0.32	0.32	0.12	0.10	0.08	0.44	0.30	0.36	1.00				
16. Calling / Texting / IM-ing Friends	1562.02	1473.55	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.02	0.13	0.03	0.37	0.20	0.19	0.05	0.07	1.00			
17. Drama	122.59	328.92	0.18	0.19	0.17	0.21	0.08	0.09	0.04	0.01	0.08	0.07	0.23	0.06	0.12	0.02	0.10	0.05	1.00		
18. Art	461.17	1174.43	0.34	0.18	0.25	0.15	0.29	0.06	0.11	0.21	0.28	0.16	0.30	0.32	0.03	0.16	0.34	0.11	0.08	1.00	
19. Music	858.26	1504.97	0.15	0.14	0.14	0.03	0.01	0.18	0.12	0.08	0.01	0.21	0.13	0.21	0.06	0.04	0.18	0.09	0.11	0.12	1.00
20. Creative Writing	655.52	1558.35	0.24	0.06	0.11	0.13	0.23	0.15	0.26	0.45	0.23	0.22	0.16	0.35	0.25	0.24	0.36	0.07	0.03	0.50	0.01

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